

Thatcher accepts 'more in sorrow'

Howe resigns in protest over Europe

By ROBIN OAKLEY AND PHILIP WEBSTER

SIR Geoffrey Howe, the deputy prime minister, resigned from the government last night in protest at the prime minister's attitude to the European Community, exposing the raw nerves and bitter divisions of the Tory party over Europe.

Relations between the two had been cool for months. Margaret Thatcher believed that he was undermining her with a series of coded speeches deviating from the official line on Europe but never by a sufficient margin to precipitate his dismissal. Friends said that her behaviour at the Rome summit had proved the final straw.

Sir Geoffrey, who is 63 and who has been famed for his political "suckability", handed in a resignation letter at about 6pm at a half-hour meeting with Mrs Thatcher in Downing Street last night. She accepted it "more in sorrow than in anger".

The resignation of her deputy is the most damaging of a long series of departures from her cabinet on European questions over the past year,

including those of former Chancellor, Nigel Lawson, and the former trade secretary, Nicholas Ridley. It means that Mrs Thatcher herself is the only survivor from her original cabinet.

The arrival on the backbenches of Sir Geoffrey, Mrs Thatcher's first Chancellor, will reopen questions about the leadership. MPs were even wondering last night if Sir Geoffrey, who has long nurtured leadership ambitions, will challenge the prime minister when she comes up for election next month.

The two have been at odds ever since what he regarded as his humiliating removal from the Foreign Office in July last year. Mrs Thatcher then switched Sir Geoffrey to the leadership of the Commons, replacing him with John Major. Mrs Thatcher had been unhappy about his role at the Madrid summit when he and Mr Lawson helped to push her into a commitment to joining the exchange-rate mechanism.

Only this week in the Commons, after Tory right wingers had called for Sir Geoffrey to be sacked, Neil Kinnock challenged the prime minister to offer public support to her deputy. She declined, saying that he was too big a man to need it. This week, too, Sir Geoffrey published an article contradicting the sovereignty arguments which she uses in resisting the moves to closer EC integration.

Mrs Thatcher had been given no warning of Sir Geoffrey's intentions. He asked for the meeting himself and then announced that he intended to go. As leader of the Commons, he had wanted for the completion of the 1989-90 Commons programme with the prorogation of parliament yesterday.

Sir Geoffrey was refusing all requests for interviews last night, letting his long resignation letter speak for itself.

His resignation is the most graphic confirmation that the European issue can split the Conservative party. It precipitated the walkout by Chancellor, Nigel Lawson, last October and the forced

resignation of Mr Ridley earlier this year. On Monday, Sir Geoffrey sat "grim-faced" as Mrs Thatcher reported to the Commons on the Rome summit and castigated Britain's European partners.

His departure could not come at a worse time. The Tories are trailing by sixteen points in national opinion polls. After the dramatic loss of the Eastbourne by-election they face the prospect of finishing third to the Liberal Democrats at the two forthcoming by-elections in Labour-held seats of Bradford North and Bingley.

The Bank of England will be standing by this morning to support the pound if necessary in London. The resignation is bound to damage confidence in the markets, and both sterling and the stock market are likely to open sharply lower.

In New York, the pound fell to DM2.9250 pound, the lowest since Britain joined the exchange-rate mechanism last month, as the resignation was announced over the news wires.

It then recovered a little to around 2.93, still a piffling lower than the levels at which it was trading before the news broke.

There was little change against the dollar. Dealers said the reaction was muted as Sir Geoffrey was not regarded as a key government figure in economic terms. But the foreign exchange markets were braced for a further reaction when the Asian markets opened.

Currency markets were already nervous about the prospect of an interest rate reduction, and sterling spent most of yesterday's trading session below the DM2.95 benchmark rate at which Britain entered the ERM.

Sir Geoffrey was responsible for the deeply "monetarist" 1981 budget, although it was always assumed that Nigel Lawson was the guiding hand behind the tough monetary stance.

Background, page 2
Leading article, page 17



Coded messages: Sir Geoffrey Howe exposed Tory raw nerves over Europe

US may risk war with food drop to envoys

From SUSAN ELLICOTT in WASHINGTON

THE United States, buoyed by this week's UN resolution demanding that Iraq allow deliveries of food and water to embassies in Kuwait, is considering sending food to the British and American missions at the risk of provoking war with Iraq.

President Bush has denied that his administration is seeking an excuse to launch an attack against Iraq. But his recent belligerent words have aroused fears that supplying the embassies, possibly by sending an unarmed ship to Kuwait or by dropping food into the compounds by air, could provoke action by Iraq and become the flashpoint.

"I am more determined that ever: this aggression will not stand," Mr Bush said yesterday. "The brutality against innocent citizens will not be tolerated." His hints that the America might send food to its embassy came after warnings from his administration this week that it would not hesitate to use force against Iraq if provoked. In sharp contrast with earlier policy, Washington has for several days emphasised the plight of the US hostages - four of whom were released yesterday - suggesting that it is unwilling to see them suffer for much longer.

The American ambassador, his deputy and 25 others in the compound are believed to have about three to four weeks' supplies of canned tuna, rice and well water. The two remaining British diplomats are living on a similar diet.

American officials have tried to play down the possibility of imminent conflict by emphasising that the growing war fever in the country is at odds with the

administration's preference for a peaceful Gulf solution, although the president has been sounding like a man preparing his country for war. "No one wants a peaceful end to this crisis more than I do," Mr Bush said in Massachusetts yesterday. "But no one is more determined to see this aggression turned back. And I will not change on that fundamental point of morality."

Baghdad continued to predict war and President Saddam yesterday met senior advisers for the second time in three days to discuss the prospects of conflict.

The official government daily, *al-Jumhuriya* said that war would render the region a barren wasteland, turning the Gulf states back into the primitive desert societies that existed before the oil boom of the Seventies. "The Gulf region will return half a century

back. The Americans and other warmongers will be preoccupied with nothing but searching for remnants of their dead bodies in the desert and the Gulf."

The departure tomorrow of James Baker, the American Secretary of State, for a tour of Europe and the Gulf tomorrow has added to the war speculation. Mr Baker is expected to try to gauge how much support Washington would have from Arab countries for a war and whether they would support a UN resolution approving the use of force against Iraq.

Meanwhile, Moscow ruled out any new peace initiative by its special envoy, Yevgeni Primakov, who returned from Baghdad on Sunday after failing to persuade President Saddam to withdraw.

Hard protest, page 12

Britain in row with allies on hostages

By ROBIN OAKLEY AND ANDREW MCEWEN

FURTHER recriminations between Britain and her EC partners are certain following the encouragement of Willy Brandt's visit to Iraq by the German and Italian governments. The initiative was sharply criticised yesterday by the foreign secretary, Douglas Hurd.

Meanwhile Edward Heath, who recently visited Baghdad to secure the release of British hostages, urged Margaret Thatcher to dissociate herself from President Bush's latest verbal attack on Saddam Hussein. Mrs Thatcher was under-

stood to be bitterly depressed by the behaviour of the two governments and is expected to take an early opportunity to make her feelings plain.

Senior government sources inquired scornfully what the supposed drive for political union and a common foreign policy for the European Community was supposed to be all about when two of Britain's EC partners were undermining the agreement made in Rome to discourage the sending of individual hostage missions almost before

Continued on page 24, col 3

No-fault divorce plans shelved

By ROBIN OAKLEY AND FRANCES GIBB

THE government has shelved plans to include any "no-fault" divorce legislation in the Queen's Speech on the basis of radical proposals for an overhaul of divorce laws published yesterday.

Although Lord Mackay of Clashfern, the Lord Chancellor, is anxious to press on with reform for the sake of the 150,000 children affected by divorce each year, other ministers have been pressing for the government to be seen to distance itself from the proposals by the Law Commission. They have won the day after arguing that any legislation on the lines proposed by the Law Commission will require careful presentation if Conservative claims to be the party of the family are not to be further damaged after the child benefit controversy.

The government was forced earlier this year to drop divorce law reforms planned for Scotland and ministers believe that any plans to rush ahead with the Law Commission proposals would risk splitting the Conservative party in the Commons in what is likely to be an election year. It is expected that the divorce reforms will now be absorbed into a package of family policies being prepared for the Conservative election manifesto.

Ann Widdecombe, Conservative MP for Maidstone, last night welcomed the proposals for divorce over time and for arrangements over children to be settled in advance but said that she would be totally against any further easing of divorce.

She said: "I strongly disapprove of no-fault divorce. One reason for the huge increase in the number of divorces has been the speed

Continued on page 24, col 4
Mediation the key, page 5
Modern divorce, page 16
Leading article, page 17

Saturday Review

On the road with Lenny



Stephen Spender recalls a car journey across Fifties America made with Leonard Bernstein (above)

MacLaine, live in London



"I thought, oh, my God, they've been drinking since Thursday. I had to work," Shirley MacLaine, back on the boards and bound for a season in London

Wine for Christmas

Save money on two cases of French wine for Christmas, selected by Jane MacQuitty

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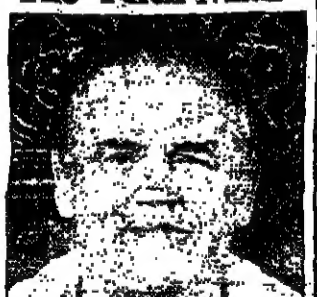
Polly Peck redundancies

Administrators running Polly Peck made 70 staff redundant at the group's fresh fruit and electronics headquarters. Mrs Peck, the group's chairman, won leave to seek a judicial review of the Serious Fraud Office's refusal to tell him what alleged offences it is investigating. Page 25

Card offer

Discounts for cash purchases could be offered to credit card users from March next year after a ruling by the government. Page 3

The 'Fifth Man'



Lord Armstrong of Ilminster, the former Secretary to the Cabinet, says today in a letter to *The Times* that the recent testimony by the former KGB spy Oleg Gordievsky confirming that John Cairncross was the "Fifth Man" has virtually destroyed the case for believing that Sir Roger Hollis, the former head of MI5, might have been a Russian agent. Letters, page 17

Roads proposal

Government attempts to recruit private sector capital for road transport infrastructure will step up next week when a proposal to increase privately-built roads and bridges will be unveiled. Page 6
Leading article, page 17

India clashes

Security forces battled to control Hindu-Muslim clashes in India yesterday as V.P. Singh, the prime minister, came under renewed pressure to resign. Page 11

Foul play

A crackdown on the so-called "professional foul" in football is threatening on referees' interpretation of this blight on the modern game. Page 48

INDEX

Arts	21-22
Births, marriages, deaths	19
Business	25-31
Clubs	17
Court & social	18
Crosswords	19-24
Law Report	31
Leading articles	17
Obituaries	17
Politics	18
Sport	36-40
TV & Radio	23
Weather	24

IRA 'safe houses' searched

By STEWART TENDLER
CRIME CORRESPONDENT

POLICE are carrying out a detailed search of two flats in Sudbury, northwest London, thought to have been used by IRA terrorists.

No arms or explosives have been uncovered although traces of explosives have been found at one of the flats. Police have also found false papers and documents although there are no signs of any target lists. One of the flats is known to have been rented by an unknown Irishwoman. Police believe that the addresses might have been used by members of IRA active service units.

Detectives have been working in the area for some time interviewing landlords of short-let premises. The active service units are suspected of using a network of temporary homes in London and the Midlands as cover from which to launch attacks.

Broadwater verdicts are studied

By QUENTIN COWDRY HOME
AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

MINISTERS are considering "very carefully" claims that three men were wrongly convicted of the murder of PC Keith Blakelock in the Tottenham riot of 1985, John Patten, the Home Office minister, said yesterday.

David Waddington, the home secretary, would decide as soon as possible how to respond to the allegations, Mr Patten said. Mr Waddington can do one of three things: dismiss the evidence; refer the cases back to the Court of Appeal; or recommend a free or conditional pardon.

Lawyers for the so-called Broadwater Three - Winston Silcott, Engin Raghup and Mark Braithwaite - petitioned the Home Office earlier this year to reconsider the convictions after a BBC television documentary questioned the reliability of evidence against Raghup and Braithwaite.

US courts break frightening new ground

From CHARLES BREMNER
IN NEW YORK

NICELY timing its move for Halloween, the United States Supreme Court this week tackled a question now preoccupying lawyers throughout America: Can you sue someone for scaring the wits out of you and if so for how much?

Suits for "emotional distress" have multiplied over the past couple of years as citizens have won ever bigger sums from juries who believed they merited compensation for unpleasant experiences that caused no bodily injury. Indeed, if war breaks out in the Gulf it can be only a matter of time, legal experts say, before the courts are faced with litigation by bereaved families and traumatised GIs.

Among notable recent cases, an oil engineer in Louisiana took home

\$125,000 (£64,500) for the embarrassment he endured when his employer asked him to submit a urine sample for a drug test which he failed. In a California case a couple won heavy damages for the nightmares they suffered after witnessing a fatal accident on a cable car at Palm Springs.

In another variation, emotional distress was an element in a suit brought on Wednesday by a group of homeless people against the city authorities for failing to provide enough public lavatories.

The test case chosen by the Supreme Court involves air travel, the biggest and potentially most lucrative field for emotional distress. A Minnesota jury recently gave \$50,000 to a passenger on a TWA flight whose pilots temporarily lost control of the aircraft. Now the supreme court is

considering a suit by passengers who were terrified for ten minutes when all three engines failed on an Eastern Airlines flight from Miami to the Bahamas. The pilots restarted one engine and landed safely.

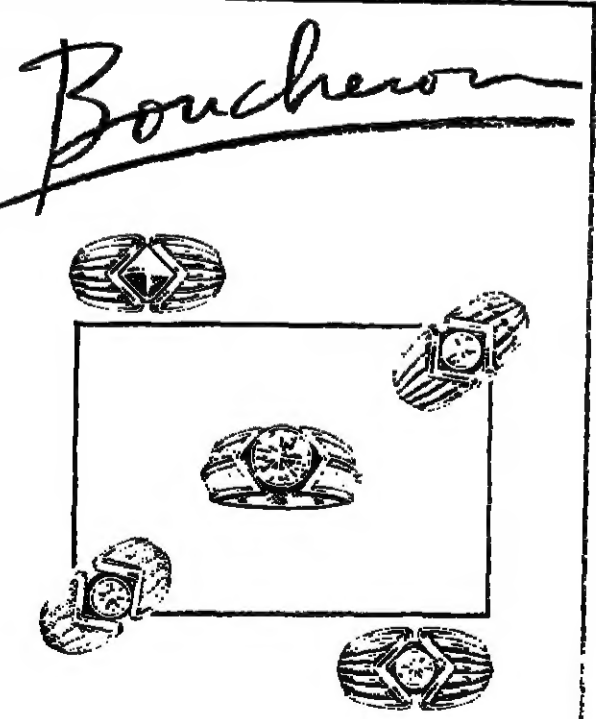
An Atlanta court has already ruled that the plaintiffs are entitled to millions of dollars in damages. The supreme court's decision will have enormous consequences for the liability of all airlines carrying Americans.

Joel Eaton, the passengers' lawyer, told the court the airline had inflicted a terrifying experience on its customers that had resulted in lasting psychic damage. The lawyer for Eastern Airlines said that a ruling for the passengers would bring a deluge of suits from passengers every time they suffered turbulence or a mechanical problem in flight. "They can say:

"When you shut down that engine, it sure scared me." Appearing to share that view, Justice Thurgood Marshall commented: "I've been on a half-dozen planes where the engines fell out. Do I get some money?"

Insurance companies particularly are watching the case nervously. If the court finds for the passengers, it will reinforce the new concept of "zone of danger", devised by plaintiff lawyers who argue that a big fright from proximity to an accident or other misfortune is as bad as bodily injury.

Larry Bodine, publisher of *Lawyer's Almanac* magazine said: "It could mean that anyone who sees a tragedy could sue for emotional distress." Robert Wilmore, a former official with the Justice Department wondered: "Can we sue a driver who almost hit us? Where does it stop?"



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The faithful dogged lawyer who never lost his head

Sir Geoffrey Howe's resignation yesterday deprived the cabinet of its last link with Mrs Thatcher's 1979 top table. Nicholas Wood, Political Correspondent, reflects on his long political career

SIR Geoffrey Howe yesterday followed in the footsteps of four of his most senior former colleagues when he resigned his posts as deputy prime minister and leader of the Commons.

Like Michael Heseltine, Sir Leon Brittan, Nigel Lawson and Nicholas Ridley, Europe finally proved the undoing of a man who was once one of Margaret Thatcher's most trusted lieutenants.

Until yesterday, Sir Geoffrey, aged 63, was the only survivor of Mrs Thatcher's first Cabinet. Now there is no one at the top table who has been with her since she came to power in 1979.

Sir Geoffrey, a barrister and QC, was first elected to the Commons in 1964 and held junior ministerial rank in Edward Heath's ill-fated 1970-74 administration.

After Margaret Thatcher became Tory leader in 1975 he was promoted to shadow chancellor, an area where in power he was eventually to make his greatest mark. He also played a major part in forging the right-wing, free-market ticket on which Mrs Thatcher won the 1979 election.

His 1981 budget, in which he cut public spending during the midst of a recession, was widely vilified at the time.

However, Sir Geoffrey, given ample opportunity to display his most enduring characteristics of doggedness and persistence under fire, simply kept his head down and ploughed on. Revenge was sweet. The economy began a slow recovery and the Conservatives secured a landslide victory in 1983.

His reward was a move to the Foreign Office and the palatial delights of Chevening, the Foreign Secretary's official country residence. It was a job he held for six years, becoming the longest serving Foreign Secretary since the First World War. It was also where the seeds of his breach with the prime minister were sown.

In her eyes, Sir Geoffrey, once one of her most reliable supporters in cabinet, went native. No more so than over Europe — and like Mr Lawson, it was the European exchange-rate mechanism that led to his downfall. The cabinet heavyweights thought they had pulled off a tremendous coup in Madrid by persuading Mrs Thatcher to agree a form of words that led inexorably to entry last month.

But Mrs Thatcher was determined to have her revenge. Sir Geoffrey was abruptly pitchforked out of

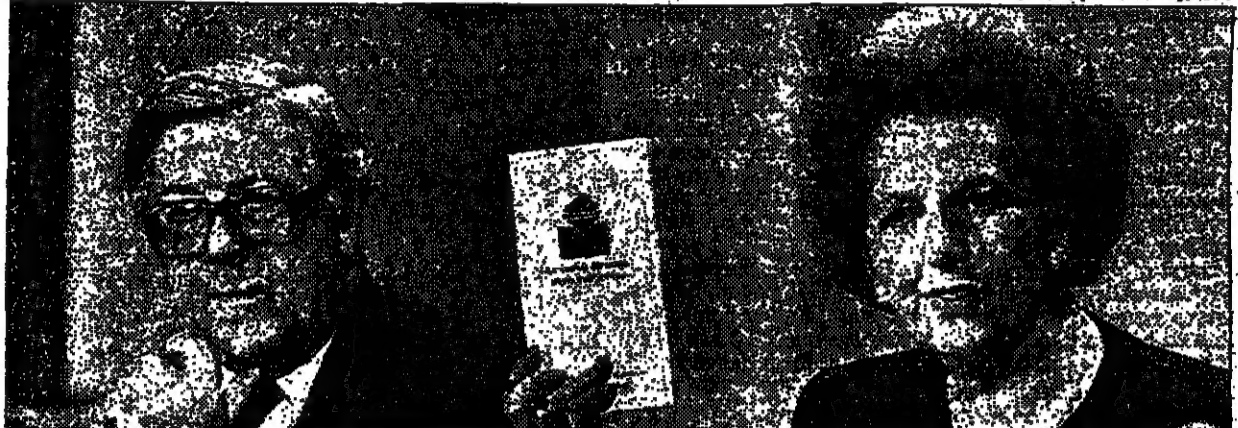
the Foreign Office and out of his beloved Chevening last summer in the cabinet reshuffle.

Since then, denied access to the inner councils of government and the target of repeated sniping from Mrs Thatcher's supporters, he has been a politician in search of a role. Yesterday, he tired of his coded attacks on the prime minister and accepted the logic of his increasingly isolated position.

Full report, page 1
Leading article, page 17



Howe's progress: lawyer in 1963, left; chancellor in 1979, top; foreign secretary in 1983; and, below, launching the European Manifesto last year.



Electronics factory to create 600 jobs

Nearly 600 jobs will be created in the west of Scotland by a £14 million development by Delta Electronics, of Taiwan, it was announced yesterday. It will be the first Taiwanese plant to set up in Scotland (Kerry Gill writes).

The factory, which will manufacture power supply units, to the Scottish high technology industry, will be sited at Inchinnan, Strathclyde.

The decision to move to Scotland was taken after extensive enquiries in other European countries, including Ireland.

Frank Haining, Delta's vice-president for sales and marketing, said that 570 jobs would be created over five years in a new factory on a 15-acre site near Glasgow airport. The plant will make switching mode power supplies used in information systems, instrument and communication products. Production is expected to begin in 1992.

Fruit stall

Marks & Spencer is to stop selling organic fruit and vegetables because of lack of demand. "Frankly, our customers were unable to find any difference in quality between organic produce and non-organic fruit and vegetables," the company said. Marks & Spencer began selling organic produce in April last year and prices were up to 50 per cent higher than non-organic produce.

Tanks delay

The decision on whether to buy British or foreign tanks to replace the army's 800 ageing Chieftains is to be delayed until next spring. Tom King, the defence secretary, said yesterday. The postponement of the decision had, however, been expected. In a written Commons answer, Mr King cited the "uncertainties" caused by the development in the Gulf as the reason for the delay.

Youngest poet

A Belfast schoolboy has won the Shell Young Poet of the Year award with an anthology including a poem about the death of three relatives in the Kegworth air crash. Connor Carson, who at 14 becomes the youngest winner of the four-year-old award, wrote the poem. "Family," after the funeral of his cousin and her two small children.

Imbert 'better'

The condition of Sir Peter Imbert, the Metropolitan police commissioner, was yesterday said to be continuing to improve after a heart attack. He may soon leave the intensive care unit at St Thomas's hospital, London.

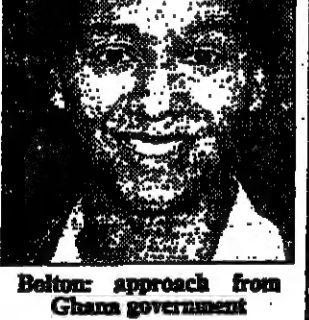
Shirley The Times receives Australia \$20, 22; Belgium \$18, 20; Canada \$20, 22; Denmark \$18, 20; France \$20, 22; Germany \$20, 22; Greece \$20, 22; Hong Kong \$20, 22; India \$20, 22; Italy \$20, 22; Japan \$20, 22; Korea \$20, 22; Malaysia \$20, 22; Mexico \$20, 22; New Zealand \$20, 22; Norway \$20, 22; Pakistan \$20, 22; Singapore \$20, 22; South Africa \$20, 22; Sweden \$20, 22; Switzerland \$20, 22; Taiwan \$20, 22; Thailand \$20, 22; USA \$20, 22.

Ghanaian mission for teenager

A TEENAGER who runs a multi-million pound computer business flew to Ghana yesterday to supervise computerisation of various Ghanaian government departments (William Cash writes).

David Bolton, aged 17, set up his computer consultancy firm as an A-level student at Wilson's grammar school near his home in Surrey. Turnover for this year is estimated at £1.2 million. Mr Bolton made his reputation with a programme for compiling doctors' records.

The request from the Ghanaian government has meant that David will be taking a year off school.



Bolton: approach from Ghana government

Chief constable welcomes enquiry

By CRAIG SETON

THE former chief constable of the West Midlands yesterday welcomed the prospect of an enquiry to discover why the headquarters of the force's serious crime squad were not sealed for two days when he ordered the disbandment of the squad and an investigation of its affairs last year.

Geoffrey Dear, now inspector of constabulary for the Midlands, had been criticised for alleged "lack of specific direction" over instructions he gave about the squad's headquarters at a meeting with two assistant chief constables in August last year. Files and other documents are believed to have gone missing from the offices.

A closed meeting of the West Midlands police authority's personnel committee yesterday agreed to recommend a special meeting of the full authority next Thursday to call in a chief constable from an outside force to investigate the alleged failure by "a senior police officer or senior police officers" of the force to secure documents at the squad's office at Bradford Street police station, Birmingham.

In a statement yesterday Mr Dear, who is outside the remit of the police authority, said: "Whilst there is no require-

ment for me to become involved in an enquiry of this nature, I am nevertheless pleased to do so and welcome the latest move. I hope that the investigation will be conducted as quickly as possible. The personnel committee considered a confidential report from Donald Shaw, assistant chief constable of West Yorkshire, who was called in by Mr Dear last year to investigate complaints against the serious crime squad over allegations of falsified evidence. Mr Shaw said in his report that the failure to secure the crime squad's headquarters was brought about by lack of specific direction by Mr Dear when, as chief constable, he held a meeting with Tom Meffan and Clive Roche, assistant chief constables, on the day it was announced the squad was being disbanded.

City's dreams hit by fire and flood

By WILLIAM CASH

HULL, once the northern capital of haddock and cod liver oil, has had its efforts to upgrade its image as a reborn thriving executive power-house, loud with the trill of mobile telephones and the growl of BMW exhausts, defiled by a bizarre catalogue of misadventure.

Things went wrong almost from the moment that the Humberside metropolis, preening itself as the waterfront renaissance city, won the contest to host this week's Association of District Councils' conference on economic development. Not quite in the league of Manchester's bid for the 1996 Olympics but somewhat more successful.

Delegates were to have stayed at the three-star Royal Hotel. Last month, it burned down, causing 140 guests to flee in their nightclothes or less. Last weekend their second choice, the Paragon, burst its water tanks and flooded. The bookings were moved to the Grange Park Hotel, an otherwise excellent establishment but for being seven miles from the city centre down a dark country lane.

For some delegates it was too much, and they opted for city-centre bed and breakfast accommodation. Others decided to stay at the Paragon,

even though it was still drying out.

The setbacks, however, were far from being over. Michael Portillo, the local government minister, withdrew from his promise to make a keynote address. Robert de Bary, an assistant director of Land Securities, called off another important speech when his father died. The magazine *Local Authorities Weekly*, principal sponsor of the event, ceased trading and Austin Mitchell, MP for nearby Great Grimsby, cried off his booking as after-dinner speaker.

His eventual replacement, a local accountant, filled his time at the microphone with three dozen risqué jokes. Patrick Doyle, leader of Hull city council, remained commendably undismayed yesterday, believing that Hull still had a rosy future as a counterweight to the Channel tunnel, and as an important port serving freight routes to northern Europe.

It is perhaps not without significance, though, that Hull, the first city to refuse entry to Charles I during the Civil War and the birthplace of the intrepid aviator Amy Johnson, was also the adopted home of Philip Larkin, the poet of unfulfilled hopes.

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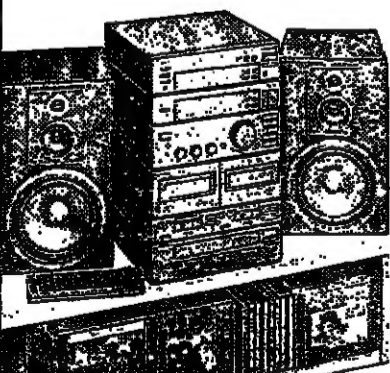
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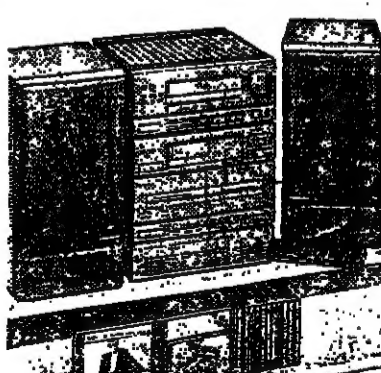
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Discounts for cash next year bring dual pricing closer

By DAVID YOUNG

SHOPPERS could be offered discounts on cash purchases or asked to pay a surcharge for using credit cards from March 1, next year.

John Redwood, corporate affairs minister, said yesterday that traders would be allowed to charge different prices, in line with a Monopolies Commission recommendation last year.

"We have taken measures to strengthen competition, which we hope will produce a better deal for customers in the shops and a better deal for those who use credit cards in respect of the range and choice of cards on offer and the charges for those cards."

He said he was not sure if many retailers would take

advantage of the opportunity to have differential prices.

"Some might decide it's a good idea to offer cash discounts to customers who don't use credit cards, others might decide that it's too complicated," Mr Redwood said. "It is not a simple matter."

Major oil companies and the large high street chains are likely to resist any two-tier pricing systems. BP will leave any decision to operators of its filling station chain, but is advising against change. Petrol company customers are the most frequent users of "plastic money". Companies said that they already sub-

sidised dealers' acceptance of credit cards. The Retail Consortium, whose members handle about 90 per cent of shopping business, welcomed the announcement, but Mike Wilsey, assistant director, said: "For most retailers it will not make any difference. They will not apply differential pricing because it would be too much of an administrative headache."

Mr Redwood also implemented another Monopolies Commission recommendation, which should open up the market for companies wishing to act as card payment processors by lifting restrictions imposed by the card issuers. He said: "The order should allow more banks and financial institutions to come into the credit card business and enhance competition."

Visa International said that a number of American states had introduced similar schemes in recent years but they had not been widely accepted. Visa has about 25 million payment cards on issue, almost 18 million of which are credit cards.

The National Consumer Council said the announcement would be "marvellous" if it resulted in discounts for cash-paying customers.

A spokesman said: "This is what we have been pressing for, but we hope traders will not interpret the move in the other way and use it as an excuse to surcharge credit card payers."

W H Smith's Do It All division is to appeal against a £10,000 fine imposed yesterday by Huddersfield magistrates for unlawful Sunday trading. It said it would do so because of continuing legal uncertainty on the issue.

The company was also ordered to pay costs of £6,238.94 in a case which started in 1986.

Car sale finance agreements fall

THE number of credit agreements taken out to buy new cars has fallen for the first time in more than five years (Kevin Eason writes).

Figures from HPI Information, the finance information group, show that the number of new car buyers taking out instalment finance fell by 2.1 per cent in the third quarter of the year.

HPI said that buyers were struggling to meet repayments as interest rates remained high. It said that car companies such as Fiat, which was offering zero per cent finance, were among those to enjoy substantial increases in credit business.

The finance-monitoring company believes that buyers are switching to cheaper models as interest rates bite.

CAP Nationwide, the national research group, has is-

sued a warning that high prices in Britain compared with the rest of the European Community, allied to high-interest repayments were forcing private and company buyers to look for good value second-hand cars instead of new ones.

CAP said: "It is now obvious to most of the car-buying public that prices here are now far in excess of the rest of the EC. These high prices are now unpalatable to the retail buyer and unacceptable to the fleet purchaser."

Company car buyers, the research group said, now preferred to buy relatively recent used models, especially G-registered cars instead of the current H-registered models. Company fleets account for half of all new car sales in Britain amounting to £10 billion a year.



On the road again: Lenihan, with an eye to the presidency, receives a hero's welcome from the party faithful on the streets of Dublin yesterday

Unbowed Lenihan on election trail

By EDWARD GORMAN
IRISH AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT



Robinson: presidency "not a consolation prize"

THE "sympathy campaign" for Brian Lenihan, the Fianna Fail presidential candidate dismissed from the Irish cabinet, began in earnest yesterday with a show of force on the streets of Dublin.

Mr Lenihan was swept like a hero on the shoulders of his supporters down O'Connell Street, the capital's main thoroughfare, surrounded by hundreds of the Fianna Fail faithful. Many in the party feel that he was shabbily treated by Mr Haughey who, they believe, sacrificed him to save his own career. To

those on the streets yesterday, allegations that Mr Lenihan lied are of no consequence and do not disqualify him from the presidency. One young woman, voicing the views of many, said: "They (politicians) are all liars anyway - who'd expect any different?"

In spite of the latest opinion polls, which show a big swing away from Mr Lenihan in favour of Mary Robinson, the independent candidate, who is 19 points ahead of him, Mr Lenihan is convinced that he can still win. Those who bet thousands of pounds on him at the bookmakers yesterday seem to be equally convinced. Mr Lenihan said:

"There are seven days to go, and in that seven days I expect to climb back to the position I was in a week ago." On the advice of his family, he had refused to resign, forcing Mr Haughey to dismiss him. Mr Lenihan said he expected Mr Haughey to campaign on his behalf, and there was no bitterness between them.

Mrs Robinson said that people would distinguish between their sympathy for Mr Lenihan, which she shared, and the question of who should be president. "They don't see the office of president as being some kind of consolation prize. People are taking it much more seriously."

Marconi note 'seen as bomb'

By JAMIE DETTMER

A COMPANY memorandum criticising profits made by Marconi for contract work worth over £1 million with the Ministry of Defence was greeted by senior executives as if it were a hand grenade, a court was told yesterday.

Kingsley Thrower, a senior contracts manager at Marconi, said that the profit on several contracts was not justified. Mr Thrower, aged 57, later reported Marconi to the police.

He told Winchester Crown Court that costs were transferred from completed contracts to new ones to disguise excessive profit-making.

Mr Thrower said that he wrote the memorandum after a pricing meeting with ministry representatives and that it was a "brief appraisal of what was coming to light".

Marconi and 14 executives deny 19 charges of theft, false accounting and deception. The prosecution claims that they stole equipment paid for by the ministry and made £300,000 in excessive profits on contracts worth £1.4 million.

Mr Thrower, who was made redundant by Marconi, denied a claim by William Denny, QC, for Marconi, that he had "laid on the brain". He admitted that he was writing a book on his time at Marconi. The case continues today.

Marsh will not give evidence

By MICHAEL HORSNELL

TERRY Marsh, the former world boxing champion, will not give evidence in his defence over the alleged shooting of his manager, Frank Warren.

Richard Ferguson, QC, for Mr Marsh, told the Central Criminal Court yesterday that he would be calling no evidence in the case after the conclusion of prosecution evidence. The jury was sent home until Monday, when closing speeches will begin. Mr Marsh denies the attempted murder of Mr Warren.

Earlier the police officer in charge of the investigation disclosed that a convicted criminal who had given evidence against Marsh had the assistance he gave taken into account when he appeared for sentence in another case. Peter Harris, who was using an alias, alleged earlier this week that Mr Marsh confessed to shooting his manager when the two prisoners were on remand.

Mr Ferguson accused Harris of lying in the witness box and suggested that by offering to give evidence against Mr Marsh he had sought to earn himself a lighter sentence in his own case. Detective Superintendent Jeffrey Rees told the court: "I can confirm that the fact he gave information was brought to the attention of the judge. I don't think Mr Marsh's name was mentioned."

It was so that the sentencing judge, if he thought it appropriate, could take it into account in sentencing.

The jury was also told yesterday that at the time of his arrest in January, Mr Marsh and his companies had debts of £124,348 according to documents seized by police. Mr Justice Fennell said, however, that the jury should wait until all evidence had been heard before judging the seriousness of the defendant's financial position.

A police forensic scientist told the court that he examined a green hooded jacket allegedly worn by the gunman on the night of the shooting which had been seized at Marsh's home, and a black overcoat worn by John Botros, Mr Warren's partner. The two men had grappled after the shooting. A forensic examination of the two garments found no fibres from one on the other.

Kevin O'Callaghan, a forensic expert in firearms and ammunition, also told the court that the gun used to shoot Mr Warren was a German-made 9mm semi-automatic Luger. He examined live and spent 9mm ammunition seized by police in the loft of Marsh's parents' home. His conclusion was that that ammunition could not have been fired from the Luger.

Clerics consider overhaul of archaic cathedral rules

By RUTH GLEDHILL
RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS REPORTER

SENIOR clerics in the Church of England have formed a working party that could herald the most far-reaching changes to the organisation of cathedrals for centuries.

Cathedral deans and provosts are to re-examine the way many cathedrals are in thrall to ancient statutes and traditions.

The working party has been set up in the aftermath of the Lincoln cathedral saga, in which the Bishop of Lincoln asked his four residentiary canons "very seriously to consider their positions". The cathedral chapter had tried to raise funds by sending its Magna Carta, one of only four contemporary versions, to an exhibition in Australia in 1988. The venture eventually cost the cathedral £56,000. None of the canons is planning to resign.

The working party, chaired by the Very Rev Dr Wesley Carr, dean of Bristol, will meet for the first time later this month at the deanery at Westminster Abbey.

The Very Rev Michael Mayne, dean of Westminster, is considered an impartial referee because the abbey, is



The Very Rev Brandon Jackson, dean of Lincoln under the personal jurisdiction of the Queen.

The Very Rev Brandon Jackson, dean of Lincoln, disclosed the formation of the working party in his latest chapter letter. Mr Jackson says: "The changes that will issue out of Lincoln's pain will affect the whole of the structure of English cathedrals."

The working party was set up following the Deans' and Provosts' Conference meeting in the Chapter House at St Paul's, London. Mr Jackson says: "Recognising the urgent need for a new constitution for cathedrals, that our ancient

statutes are no longer appropriate for these great multi-million religious foundations, we have set up a working party to consider how best we can revise the structures for government, both for efficiency but above all for the mission of God's Kingdom in and through our cathedrals."

The admonition to the dean and chapter delivered by The Rt Rev Robert Hardy, bishop of Lincoln, over the Magna Carta affair, complained that the residentiary canons had viewed ideas and principles spelled out many centuries ago as "protective and restrictive".

The residentiary canons had complained that the dean had acted in contravention of the Laudian of Bishop Alnwick, a disciplinary judgment delivered in 1439, and of the statutes, usurping the powers belonging to the individual canons or the dean and chapter jointly.

Each cathedral has its own individual constitution and statutes. Although all were revised under the 1963 Cathedral Measure, many anomalies and archaic rules survive. The working party could initiate a wholesale review of freehold positions.

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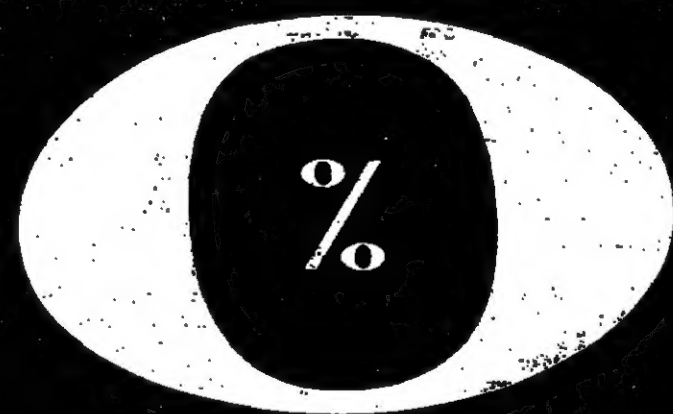
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		Max. Repayment Period	24 months	24 months
		Monthly Payment	\$102.33	\$119.17
		Finance Charges	NIL	NIL
		Total Credit Price	\$6140.00	\$7150.00
		Minimum Deposit	\$99.00	\$1430.00 (20%)
3 Years	6.9% p.a. 13.8% APR	Max. Repayment Period	36 months	36 months
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Social intern

THE British have the high divorce rate in Europe, with one in three marriages ending up in court. However, the statistics indicate that they have more to do with the custom than with law.

Divorce in Spain is relatively new. In 42 years, Franco came to power in 1939, there was no divorce. The wealthy and aristocratic could get an annulment, but the Roman Catholic Church but there was no legal basis for the ordinary couple. If marriage was on the rocks, in 1981, however, he introduced one of the easiest divorce procedures in Europe. Provided there is mutual consent, divorce can take only a couple of months. Yet Spain still has one of the low divorce rates, at only 4.5 per cent of marriages.

In France, divorce for adultery was legalised in 1792 during the revolution. This was one of people doubting in 1978 when introduced by mutual consent. The easier and there was less need for an estate lawyer to organise a police raid on matrimonial. Some 10 per cent of marriages

Dyslexia research unveiled

A £250,000 programme will research and announce, starting by Mr Howarth, a junior school minister, the three-year project will monitor the use of dyslexic children.

Mr Howarth made an announcement at the first of the technology colleges, Croydon, South London, where the programme will start. The project will have far-reaching benefits for all dyslexic children, he said.

'We are looking to build up valuable work that is taking place elsewhere and making findings.'

One feature of the programme will be the research on the possible benefits to computers for victims of dyslexia, a form of word blindness.

The British Dyslexia Association estimates 150,000 children have reading difficulties but fewer than one in 20 are specialist help.

هكذا في الأصل

Law Commission report on divorce reform

Mediation urged to remove acrimony

By FRANCES GIBB, LEGAL AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

AN OVERHAUL of divorce law in England and Wales, in which the role of fault is scrapped and divorce becomes a one-year process, was proposed by the Law Commission yesterday.

The reforms are intended to remove the acrimony and hostility engendered by the present fault-based laws in which couples are forced to "separate or recriminate". In a reversal of the present law, couples would be obliged to consider the future and to make arrangements for children, the home and money before being granted a divorce. At present, decrees in uncontested divorces can be obtained within six months, with disputes over children and finance coming afterwards.

There will be a bigger role for conciliation and mediation services in helping couples sort out their problems, and probably a correspondingly smaller role for lawyers. Brenda Hoggett, QC, the law commissioner in charge of the divorce law team, said yesterday: "The totality of these proposals is not to make divorce either easier or harder. It is simply quite radically different and, in our view, a great deal better."

The reforms are being put forward at a time of widespread concern at the rate of divorce and its effects on couples and children. Last year, 150,872 couples divorced in England and Wales, affecting 150,000 children under 16. The present law has been widely criticised as making matters worse: it is confusing, misleading, discriminatory and unjust, provokes hostility and bitterness and drives couples into entrenched positions.

Under the new proposals, the sole ground for divorce should remain that the marriage has irretrievably broken down, and this would be proved by the passage of a 12-month minimum period of consolidation and reflection in which couples could use conciliation, counselling and mediation services. Professor

Hoggett said that this period was not to be a passive waiting period. "It should be put to good use, exchanging information about the children, finances and property and making proposals about what would happen to them in the event of the couple being divorced." It would also give them a chance to reflect and to decide if the breakdown was irretrievable. If, after 12 months, both accepted this was the case, this was solid evidence of the breakdown.

Counselling or conciliation would not be compulsory. "People offering these services do not want to offer them to conscripts," Professor Hoggett said. The court would have power to refer people for an interview, although there will not be sanctions if they refuse.

Although the aim is to move away from fault, fault might still be a factor if relevant in reaching decisions on the children, home or finances. Courts would have power to give orders to protect spouses against violence or other molestation and to decide who should remain in the matrimonial home during the 12 months. Making suitable arrangements for the future would not be a prerequisite of every divorce, because some people might exploit that for vindictive purposes, the commission says. Courts would have power to postpone a divorce if it was thought desirable to ensure such



Hoggett: aim not to make divorce easier or harder



Marriage guidance: a bigger role is planned for conciliation services in helping couples sort out their problems

arrangements were made. In a minority of extreme cases where a divorce would cause serious financial or other hardship to one spouse, the courts could prohibit a divorce. Either spouse could initiate the new divorce process or do so jointly.

There is widespread support for "consensual" divorce, with the couple being encouraged from the outset to take joint responsibility for the divorce. This would be done by a sworn statement, made by one or both parties, that he, she or they believed that the marital relationship had broken down and wished to consider the arrangements for the future. This would be sworn before a court official or commissioner for oaths and lodged at a court. The statement would be on a special form, giving details of the children, home and finances.

Both parties would then receive an information pack from the court, explaining the 12-month period and the procedures during it, the legal

effects of divorce and separation, powers of the court and purposes of counselling, conciliation and mediation services that are available.

The beginning of the process would be recorded to prevent deception. The couple need not separate if they did not wish to and the decision of separating or divorcing would be made towards the end of the 12-months when an app-

lication is made towards the court. After three months, the court would monitor progress. Conciliators would have to report back to the court on the outcome of the meeting.

Courts would also have power to adjourn a particular issue to enable the parties to resolve it amicably. Any such adjournment would be a fixed period, to avoid either party using it as a delaying tactic. At

the end of 11 months, if the arrangements have been made, either party could apply for a divorce or separation order, which would be granted within one month. The court will, however, be able to postpone the divorce for any reason.

Family Law: the Ground for Divorce (Law Commission, Stationery Office, £15)

Video exposes Spain's cruel abattoirs

By MICHAEL HORNSBY, AGRICULTURE CORRESPONDENT

BRITISH livestock could suffer barbaric deaths in Spanish slaughterhouses when the single market is introduced in the European Community after 1992, an animal rights group said yesterday. At present, Britain bans the export of live animals to Spain and Portugal on welfare grounds.

Compassion in World Farming (CIWF) has taken video film of conditions inside two Spanish slaughterhouses, which shows sheep having their throats slit after being hung up by a hind leg without any pre-stunning to render them unconscious. Cattle are shown being slaughtered after having been only imperfectly stunned.

Tim Armstrong, who took the film, said: "These are barbaric methods completely contrary to EC law. The film shows the importance of abolishing the export of live animals, as we have no control over where they will end up once they leave this country."

David Bee, a veterinary surgeon, said that he was horrified by the film, which is the most graphic evidence so far of the conditions in some Spanish abattoirs. CIWF is to hand over a copy of the video to John Gummer, agriculture minister, today and urge him to maintain curbs on the export of animals to Spain.

Under EC and British law, livestock must be stunned with electric tongs or a captive bolt pistol, which fires a retractable metal rod directly into the brain, before they are shackled by a hind leg and hung upside down to have their throats cut. The only exception allowed is for Jewish and Muslim religious slaughter. The Spanish slaughtermen are shown using a captive bolt

pistol on cattle, but in such a way as merely to immobilise the animals while leaving them at least partially conscious and able to feel pain, according to the animal rights group. "They fire into the base of the neck, so as to hit the spinal cord, instead of directly into the brain from the front," Mr Armstrong said. "Sometimes they would need two or three shots."

The Spanish slaughtermen told him that sheep and cattle brains were a delicacy in Spain, Mr Armstrong said, and that they did not want to use any stunning method that would damage the brain. "There are scenes on the video where the cows are having their throats cut and groaning very audibly. The sound only starts to die away as they bleed to death."

Mr Armstrong managed to talk his way inside the Valdetorres del Jarama abattoir near Madrid, where sheep were being slaughtered, and the Afriso Val Mojado slaughterhouse at Toledo, where cattle were being killed.

He said that, at the Toledo slaughterhouse a veterinary surgeon was present throughout but made no attempt to ensure proper treatment of the animals. "He was only concerned about whether the animals had had tuberculosis and took no interest in their welfare prior to slaughter at all."

The agriculture ministry yesterday said that there could be legal difficulties in preventing the export of live animals to Spain and Portugal after 1992. "That is why Mr Gummer is pressing for uniform welfare standards to be enforced throughout the Community before the advent of the single market."

Social customs colour international statistics

By ALICE THOMSON

THE British have the highest divorce rate in Europe, with one in three marriages ending up in court. However, divorce statistics internationally often have more to do with social custom than with law.

Divorce in Spain is relatively new. For 42 years after Franco came to power in 1939, there was no divorce. The wealthy and influential could get an annulment from the Roman Catholic church, but there was no legal solution for the ordinary couple whose marriage was on the rocks.

In 1981, however, Spain introduced one of the easiest divorce procedures in Europe. Provided there is mutual consent, divorce can take only a couple of months. Yet Spain still has one of the lowest divorce rates, at only 6 per cent of marriages.

In France, divorce for adultery was legalised in 1792 during the revolution. The number of people divorcing doubled in 1975 when divorce by mutual consent became easier and there was no longer a need for an irate spouse to organise a police raid to prove misbehaviour. Some 28 per cent of marriages end in

divorce in France. Violence is the most regularly cited reason, and women demand divorce more often than men.

In Germany, the law was changed in 1977 to allow a divorce if a marriage had failed, deemed to have happened after a couple had lived apart for a year where both partners want a divorce, or for three years where only one partner wants a divorce. A strong back-up system of private and state counselling has an 80 per cent success rate in resolving problems of property and access to children. About 2.3 million people are divorced in Germany, and

Divorces per 1,000 marriages

UK	12.3
Denmark	12.8
Netherlands	8.7
France	8.5
Germany	8.3
Belgium	7.3
Luxembourg	6.4
Greece	2.5
Norway	2.1
Italy	1.1
Spain	0.5
Portugal	0.4
Ireland	0

couples are increasingly opting to live together.

At 9 per cent, Italy has one of the lowest divorce rates in Europe; divorce was legalised in 1975, but few broken marriages end in the courts, especially in the south. Also, four out of five divorced Italians remarry.

In Norway, infidelity by one partner was grounds for immediate divorce until the law was changed last year, because so many couples fabricated affairs to get an easy divorce. Now divorce is automatic after a year if both partners consent; if only one wants a divorce, it takes two years.

There are no grounds for divorce in Ireland, although in rare cases a marriage can be annulled for special reasons through the Catholic church. Divorce was rejected in a referendum in 1986.

In predominantly Catholic countries in eastern Europe, divorce was a contentious issue under communist rule. The old regime in Poland permitted "quickie" divorces in local courts. The Solidarity-led government has made the procedure more difficult and limited it to regional courts.

Dyslexia research unveiled

A £250,000 research programme into dyslexia was announced yesterday by Alan Howarth, a junior education minister. The three-year project will monitor the work of 20 dyslexic children.

Mr Howarth made the announcement at the Harris city technology college, in Croydon, south London, where the programme will be carried out. The project would have far-reaching benefits for all dyslexic children, he said. "We are looking to build upon valuable work that is already taking place elsewhere and to compare findings."

One feature of the programme will be research on the possible benefits of computers for victims of dyslexia, a form of word blindness. The British Dyslexia Association estimates 150,000 children have reading difficulties but fewer than one in 30 gets specialist help.

Calcutt criticised by Press Council

By MELINDA WITTSTOCK, MEDIA CORRESPONDENT

THE Press Council has attacked as "seriously flawed" the proposal that the new Press Complaints Commission, which replaces it in January, should deal solely with the adjudication of complaints and not with the defence of press freedom.

The Press Council said that the central flaw of the Calcutt report into privacy and the press was its decision that the roles of handling complaints and defending press freedom were incompatible.

A report of a Press Council working party said: "For 37 years the two roles have been complementary, necessary counterparts of each other. Judging complaints about the content of newspapers and the conduct of journalists frequently involves weighing the claims of press freedom and press responsibility."

"In a free society the exis-

tence of a body to investigate the press is only tolerable if the same body has a continuing duty to defend the freedom of the press in the interests of the public. If the Calcutt recommendation is implemented, no single organisation would be charged with that role."

Lord McGregor of Durris, who is to be the first chairman of the complaints commission, said: "I think Calcutt was mistaken in the sharp antithesis it drew between a body dealing with complaints and a body dealing with press freedom."

"To deal effectively with complaints... is an important contribution to the maintenance of press freedom." Scottish newspaper editors will urge the government today not to extend to Scotland anti-intrusion laws proposed by the Calcutt committee.

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Government action urged on plight of child refugees

By BILL FROST

TRAUMATISED child refugees arriving in Britain from Eritrea have been subjected to the most appalling treatment and government neglect, relief agencies said yesterday.

Michael Feeney, refugee officer for the Roman Catholic diocese of Westminster, said that many of the children had endured more damaging experiences since coming to this country than they faced at home in a war zone. Since the end of August, about 225 young Eritreans have arrived on visitors' visas. Their parents sold everything to buy airline tickets knowing that if their children stayed they would be conscripted into the Ethiopian army to fight their own people.

The refugees, some as young as 11, have been arriving at Heathrow and Gatwick terrified and all but penniless. "Some have been picked up by social workers, some have befriended passengers on the flight and asked for shelter, but others have had to fend for themselves as best they can in a country which must scare

and confuse them," Mr Feeney said. The British Refugee Council has urged the government to set up reception centres for unaccompanied young people arriving in Britain. Responsibility for such exiles rests with local authority social services departments, many of which say that they cannot cope with the financial burden.

Fourteen young Eritreans who arrived at the end of August spent two months living unsupervised in the cold, damp crypt of a church in Hackney, east London. They are now being cared for at a hostel run by Mr Feeney.

Camden, one of several London boroughs to have accepted the refugees, estimates that an extra £750,000 will have to be found to pay for their care over the present financial year. The council said the government had a responsibility to act and it was indefensible to let them just wander the streets of London.

The Home Office and the health department said last night that ministers fully understood the concerns expressed, and the difficulties presented by "an influx of this kind". The government would be issuing guidelines to local authorities on their legal obligations to care for young refugees and seeking further information about possible future arrivals from Eritrea.

FBI 'committed to Lockerbie hunt'

WILLIAM Sessions, director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, last night said that he was optimistic that the terrorists who bombed Pan Am Flight 103, which blew up over Lockerbie killing 270 people, will be caught (Kerry Gill writes).

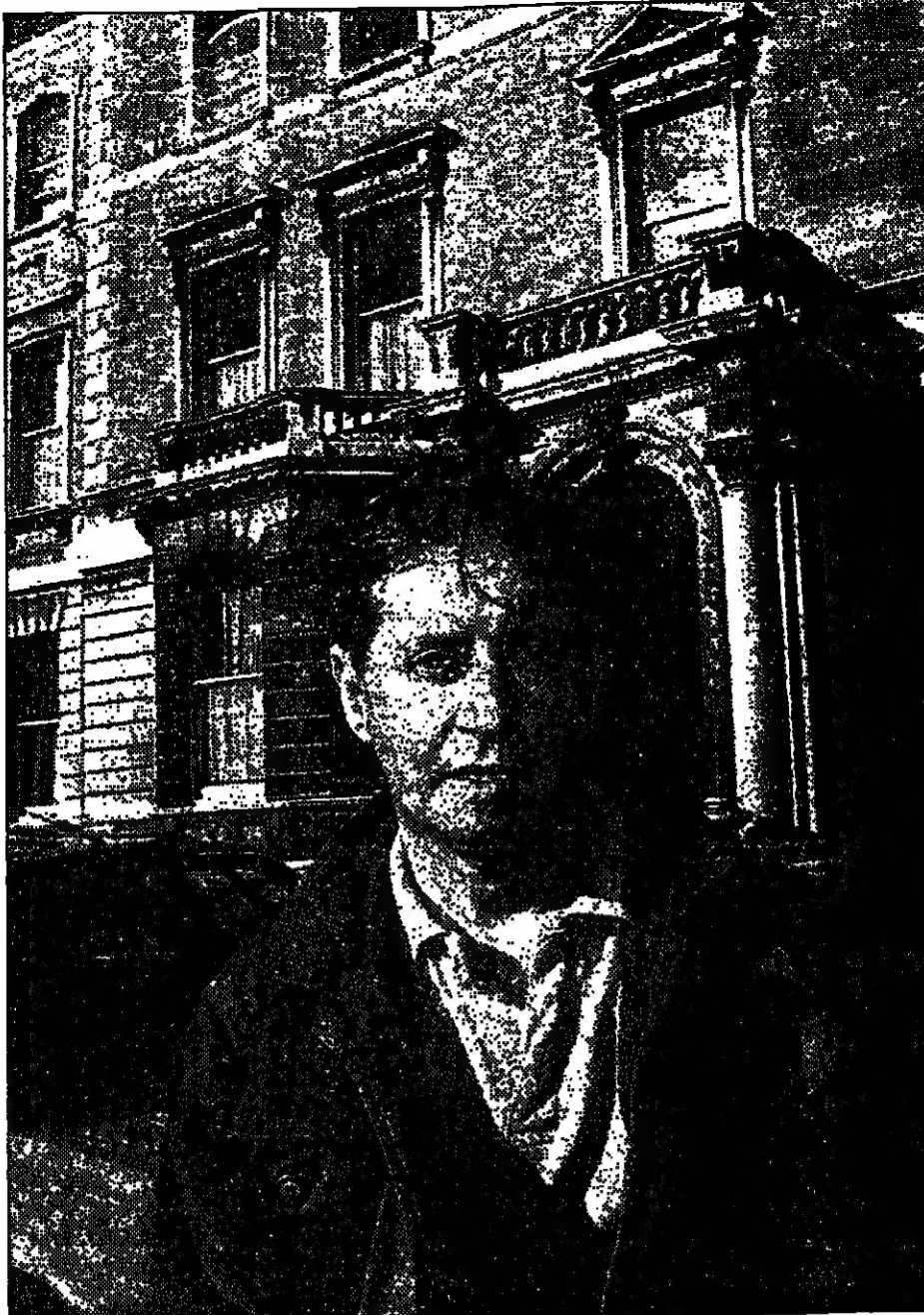
Mr Sessions pledged that the FBI would work on the case until it was solved. "You have my assurance that we will not cease our efforts," he said, giving the James Smart lecture to police officers, lawyers and judges in Glasgow.

International co-operation among investigators since the

disaster, in December 1988, had been unprecedented, and he was "strongly optimistic that this horrendous crime will be solved and those responsible brought to justice".

Mr Sessions gave a warning that the single European market would give international criminals new opportunities. If border controls went, so would the means of tracking terrorists moving from one country to another, he said.

Security men guarding Flight 103 at Heathrow knew nothing of a warning of radio cassette bombs, the Lockerbie enquiry was told yesterday.



Helping hand: Michael Feeney at the London hostel which has become home for young refugees some of whom lived unsupervised for two months in a crypt

Cabinet seeking more private cash for roads

The government wants the private sector to finance construction of roads and bridges, in return for the right to levy tolls. Michael Dynes investigates

GOVERNMENT attempts to recruit private-sector capital for a new transport infrastructure will step up next week when a proposal to increase privately built roads and bridges will be unveiled.

The move could lead, in the long term, to the creation of a private-sector trunk road and motorway network, designed to supplement existing public roads and financed by user tolls.

The proposal, which is to be announced in the Queen's Speech, was first suggested in the 1989 green paper, *New Roads By New Means*, and will effectively breach the principle that roads are free at the point of use, established after the demise of turnpikes in the 19th century. The aim is to reduce the financial burden at present shouldered by the taxpayer by transferring the risk of rising construction costs to private-sector companies. In return, such companies would be able to make an appropriate profit by levying user tolls.

Under the plan, new legislation would establish the principle that roads and bridges should, where possible, be built by the private sector, thereby eliminating the need to secure parliamentary approval for individual toll road schemes as they arise.

In spite of widespread scepticism about the viability of extending the frontiers of the free market into the provision of transport infrastructure, the government already has ten privately financed road and bridge schemes on the agenda.

They include the new Dartford-Thurrock crossing, which will complete the M25 orbital motorway; the proposed second Severn crossing; the Birmingham northern relief road (BNRR), designed to relieve congestion on the M6; new motorways linking the M25 to Chelmsford and Rayleigh; and additional estuarial crossings on the Thames, the Mersey, and the Tamar.

The idea stems from the government's success in persuading the private sector to assume responsibility for the building and financing of the Channel tunnel. Applying the same principle to inland roads and bridges, however, causes additional headaches.

New estuarial crossings financed by the private sector are a relatively risk-free undertaking. The consortium building and financing the £286 million Dartford crossing, for example, knows that its quasi-

monopolistic position almost guarantees the necessary return on its investment. In addition, tolls for estuarial crossings are generally accepted by road users.

Privately financed toll roads, such as the proposed BNRR, which would have to compete with existing public roads, will get no such guarantees. Indeed, the banks and construction companies could find themselves in the unenviable position whereby the toll road attracts enough traffic to relieve congestion on the public road, without generating the revenue required for them to recoup the cost of construction.

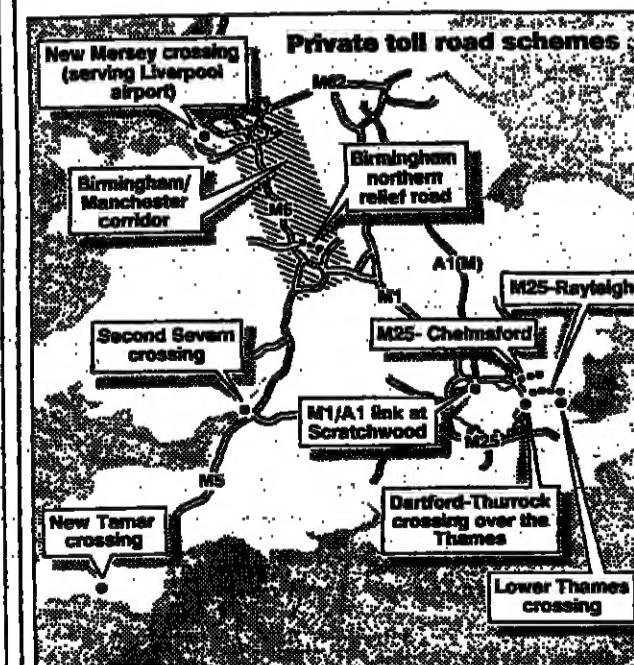
Although the government has ruled out the possibility of creating inland quasi-monopolies by handing over adjacent public roads to the private sector, the construction industry is nonetheless taking the idea seriously. The transport department is at present examining bids from three competing consortia, led by Trafalgar House, Tarmac, and Manufacturers Hanover, for the BNRR scheme, estimated to cost £250 million.

The viability of the project will be the acid test of attempts to recruit private capital into a hitherto exclusively public domain. Even more ambitious, however, is the government's efforts to encourage the private sector to produce proposals for road schemes, rather than simply taking on the risk of working on projects already contained in the national road-building programme.

Last year, after identifying a broad corridor running between Birmingham and Manchester, the government challenged the private sector to come up with its own ideas for new roads to reduce congestion between the two cities. As a result, confidential proposals have already been submitted by the Trafalgar House, Tarmac, Manufacturers Hanover and Balfour Beatty groups.

The British experiment is being viewed with intense interest in Eastern Europe, where the fledgling democracies are searching for ways in which they can rehabilitate their own neglected transport infrastructures. Critics predict a bitter controversy, however, if road users, who already pay about £4 for every £1 invested in roads, are confronted with more road charges.

Leading article, page 17



Buses are 'solution to jams'

CHRONIC urban traffic congestion could be reduced within months by the introduction of modern bus systems, an organisation representing the bus and coach industry said yesterday (Michael Dynes writes).

The Bus and Coach Council said that such a system, including a comprehensive network of priority bus lanes, bus-only roads and priority for buses at traffic lights, would cost much less than new urban road or rail systems, and could be implemented far more quickly.

Outlining a £17.5 million plan to promote the bus, the council called for the creation of a team to identify locations for pilot projects. The schemes could be financed jointly by the bus and coach industry, local authorities and the Department of Transport, and implemented by the spring of 1991, the council said. It would expect significant results by 1992.

The projects would together cost less than half the £40 million wasted daily by traffic problems nationwide, and less than one of the proposed light rail projects, it added.

BA to make cheap seats sweeter

BRITISH Airways is to give its economy class passengers boiled sweets as part of a £70 million project to improve the lot of those who sit at the back of the aircraft (Harvey Elliott writes).

The airline will also try to persuade more passengers to move up to business and first class. Some BA staff fear, however, that if economy is improved too much many business travellers will choose the lowest fare, knowing that they will get the service and comfort normally reserved for those paying more. There are signs that recent price increases have made many companies tell employees to travel economy class.

The boiled sweets were phased out when pressurised jet aircraft were introduced, but research has shown they are regarded as an important extra by many first time flyers. In addition, British Airways is to introduce more hot food, better seats, free newspapers and improved in-flight entertainment for economy passengers. The name "economy" is also being dropped in favour of "world traveller" and "euro traveller".

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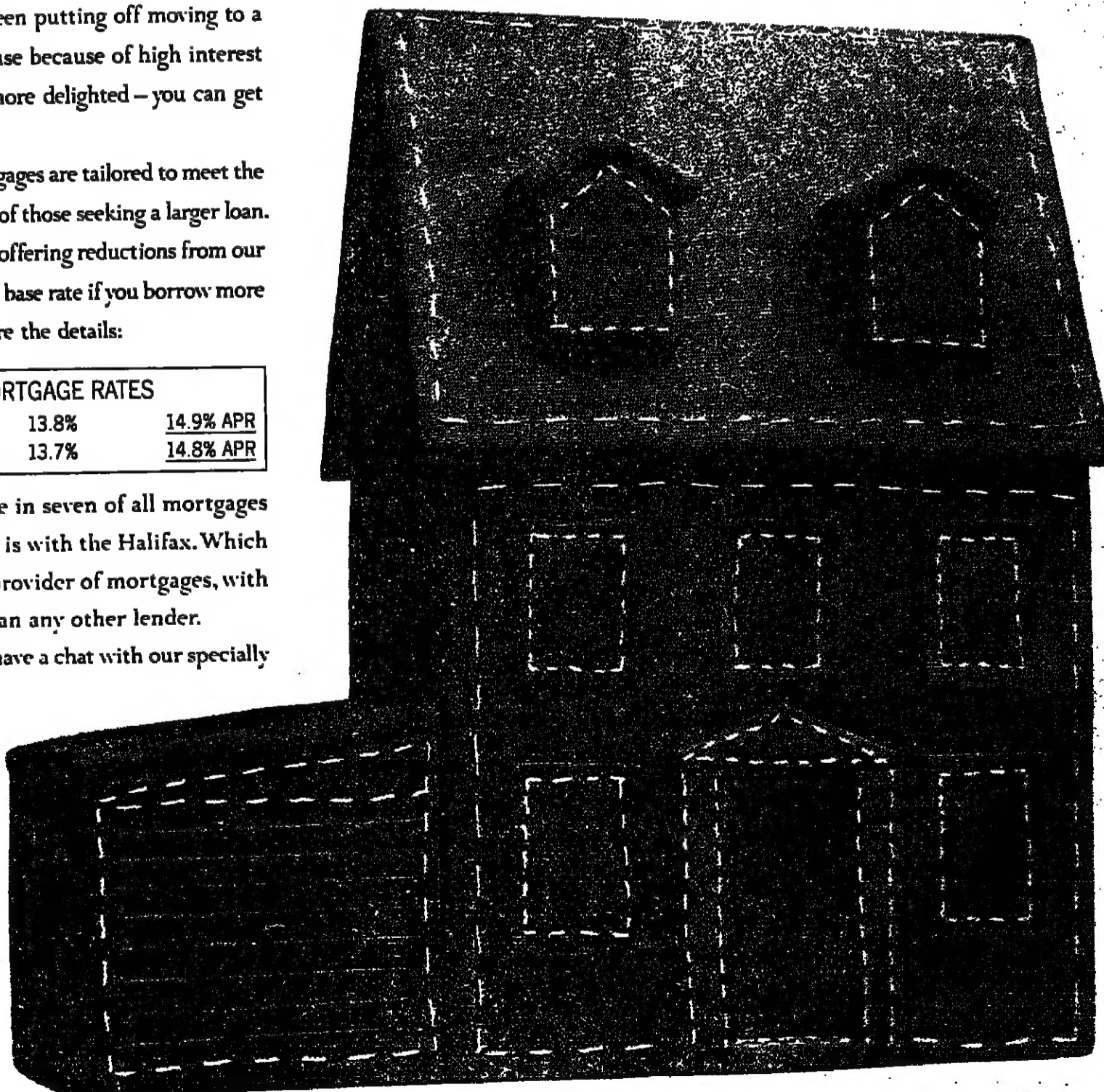
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Teachers' leaders take on left in battle over pay tactics

MANY parents who accept that classroom salaries are too low will find their loyalties torn again this weekend when they see teachers calling for strike action and work-to-rules that can only damage their children.

The threat of classroom disruption will resurface when the National Union of Teachers holds a special conference in Scarborough, North Yorkshire, on Saturday to formulate its pay claim for 1991-92. After seeking the views of its 190,000 members, the moderate executive is suggesting that all classroom teachers should receive a 10 per cent rise plus £1,500 from April 1991 with further rises in the following year which would increase salaries to between £12,502 and £23,000.

The basic rates for classroom teachers from January will be £9,000 to £16,000, although various extra payments are available.

John MacGregor, the education secretary, has told the Interim Advisory Committee on Teachers' Pay that salaries for 1991-92 should be set in the middle 50 per cent of white-collar pay settlements in the 12 months to the end of this month, a figure likely to be about 9 or 10 per cent.

The committee, chaired by Lord Chilver, has also been asked to find a way to allow schools and local authorities to set pay scales to solve local problems of teacher shortages and to reward the best teachers.

The unions, particularly the NUT, are reluctant to see too

As the biggest teaching union debates pay, its leaders believe it must avoid strike action to retain hard-won public support, reports David Tytler

much flexibility and want substantial overall increases. The loudest claims at Scarborough will come from the hard left which will continue to argue — though unsuccessfully — for a large flat-rate increase.

Doug McAvooy, general secretary of the NUT, makes no secret of his belief that his militant minority, which is on show every year at the union's annual conference, damages both the union and the image of teachers generally. It is particularly harmful, he believes, at a time when public opinion largely backs the committed teacher.

Mr McAvooy said: "There is now a greater awareness among parents and the public generally of the need to pay teachers more. Part of the battle has moved our way but we are bound to put parents off if the balance of debate in Scarborough moves towards strikes rather than reinforcing the persuasive arguments we have already used so

effectively." In an attempt to diminish the left-wing influence, Mr McAvooy persuaded the union executive to take pay out of the union's annual Easter conference and to debate it now after consultation.

While opposing strike action, the executive is likely to accept amendments which ask for certain sanctions to be put into the union's armory: that teachers should work no more than their contracted 1,265 hours a year, and that they should refuse to take part in the compulsory testing of seven year olds next May without a satisfactory pay offer. The executive, though, will be relying on the fact that no action can be taken until after a full membership ballot. Mr McAvooy is betting on a majority rejecting such moves.

All the other main unions have made their claims to the advisory committee, which will set teachers' pay for the last time before negotiating rights, taken away by Kenneth Baker three years ago to end the teachers' strikes, are restored for 1992-93. The committee will submit its report early in the new year so that Mr MacGregor can make his announcement in March.

The National Association of Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers, the country's second largest teachers' union, has already asked for a minimum increase of 15 per cent and a 35-hour week. A pay scale more directly linked to inflation and pay rises for comparable work is



Left out: union leaders hope to curb the influence of the left — evident at the NUT's April conference — in order to retain public support

favoured by the Assistant Masters and Mistresses Association, which it says would produce a classroom scale for good graduates starting on £11,800 going to a maximum of £19,600 with comparable increases in allowances for special responsibilities.

The 130,000-strong National Association of Headteachers has proposed a 13.6 per cent rise for

all heads and deputies with further increases to be negotiated with local education authorities and governors.

From January next year heads of small primary schools will receive £19,200 to £21,400 which the headteachers' association wants to raise to between £21,470 and £27,264. It would like the salaries of heads of the largest

secondary schools to rise from £37,902 to £52,833.

The Secondary Heads Association which represents 6,000 heads and deputies, has asked for a minimum 15 per cent for all teachers and another 4 per cent to be distributed by governors among deputies, heads, and some senior staff.

All the unions believe that the

public accepts that teachers' pay must be increased sufficiently to keep properly qualified staff. Mr McAvooy is concerned that scenes at Scarborough on Saturday could jeopardise that support. "We must continue to keep parents and the public on our side by argument. There is no doubt we would lose their support if we resort to disrupting schools."

Karpov error with pawn leads to a swift draw

By RAYMOND KEENE, CHESS CORRESPONDENT

THE ninth game of the World Chess Championship in New York ended abruptly early yesterday in a draw when the challenger Anatoly Karpov allowed a key pawn to be captured on the 32nd move.

Karpov had been pressing for a win with the traditionally advantageous white pieces but on the 32nd move he placed a bishop on the d2 square,

which allowed black to snatch a key central pawn. By playing the superior 32 Bf4 Karpov could have kept his chances alive for some time. However, since Gary Kasparov's position was solid it is doubtful even in that case if a win could have been achieved.

Karpov scored a slight moral victory when Kasparov abandoned his favourite King's Indian Defence after the severe battering it had received in game seven. Instead, the world champion, playing with the black pieces, reverted to the Grünfeld Defence, which had been his staple diet during the two previous title defences in 1986 and 1987.

Doubtless exhausted by the marathon game eight, one of the longest ever played in the history of world championship chess, the two contestants opted for a line where queens were exchanged, which emphasised quiet strategic manoeuvring. Karpov enjoyed a slight advantage in that he had the pair of bishops and more mobile pawns. After his error on the 32nd move, however, the position immediately became one of rooks and opposite coloured bishops, where it was clear that neither side had any prospect of victory.

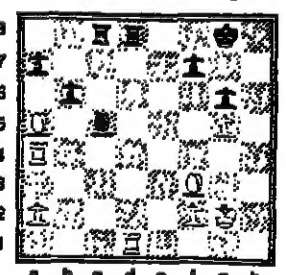
Latest scores: Kasparov: 4½; Karpov: 4½

● The headings for the moves in the eighth and ninth games were transposed. The first column should have been white and the second black.

Karpov white, Kasparov black

White	Black	White	Black
1 e4	Nf6	16 h3	Bc2
2 c4	g5	17 Bc3	Nc5
3 Nc3	g6	18 Bc3	Rc8
4 exd5	Nxd5	19 Bg4	Rb8
5 d4	Nc6	20 Bc3	Nb6
6 Bc3	Bg7	21 Bc3	0-0
7 Bc3	c5	22 Bc3	exd5
8 Qd2	exd4	23 Bc3	Ba6
9 exd4	Nc8	24 Bc3	h6
10 Rd1	Qc5	25 Bc3	Nb7
11 Qxd5	Nd5	26 Bc3	Nb7
12 Nf3	P-O	27 Bc3	Rc8
13 Bc2	Bc7	28 Bc3	Bc6
14 Bc2	b6	29 Bc3	Bc6
15 P-O	Rc8	30 Bc3	Rc8
16 Rc1	Bg4	31 Bc3	Rc8
17 d5	Nb7	32 Bc3	Rc8

Draw agreed



Positions at the draw

Our Price fined for cost clash

The Our Price record shop chain was fined almost £4,000 yesterday for selling albums at up to 25 more than the sale price in the window.

Records were marked "£4 off" in a "Mad About Music" sale but visitors to the branch at Torquay, Devon, were told that there were none left at that price and were offered stock at the full price. Torbay magistrates were told. The company admitted 12 specimen charges under the 1987 Consumer Protection Act. It was fined £300 on each and was told to pay £378 costs.

Paul Venn, a trading official who brought the prosecution, said that the case had implications for all stores that bought in goods for cut-price sales.

Reporting award

Thomson Prentice, medical correspondent of *The Times*, has won the "best individual reporting" award from the Population Institute, an American non-profit organisation based in Washington, for his coverage of global population issues. The awards are to be presented by President Mugabe of Zimbabwe in Harare on November 27.

Committal date

Three Metropolitan police officers charged with conspiring to pervert the course of justice after disturbances outside the offices of News International in Wapping, east London, in 1987, face a two-day committal hearing beginning on January 7.

Hose ban ends

Yorkshire Water yesterday lifted a ban imposed in early August on using hoses for watering gardens and washing cars. It had been feared that the ban would last until next year.

Shellfish climate pattern in doubt

By NICK NUTTALL, TECHNOLOGY CORRESPONDENT

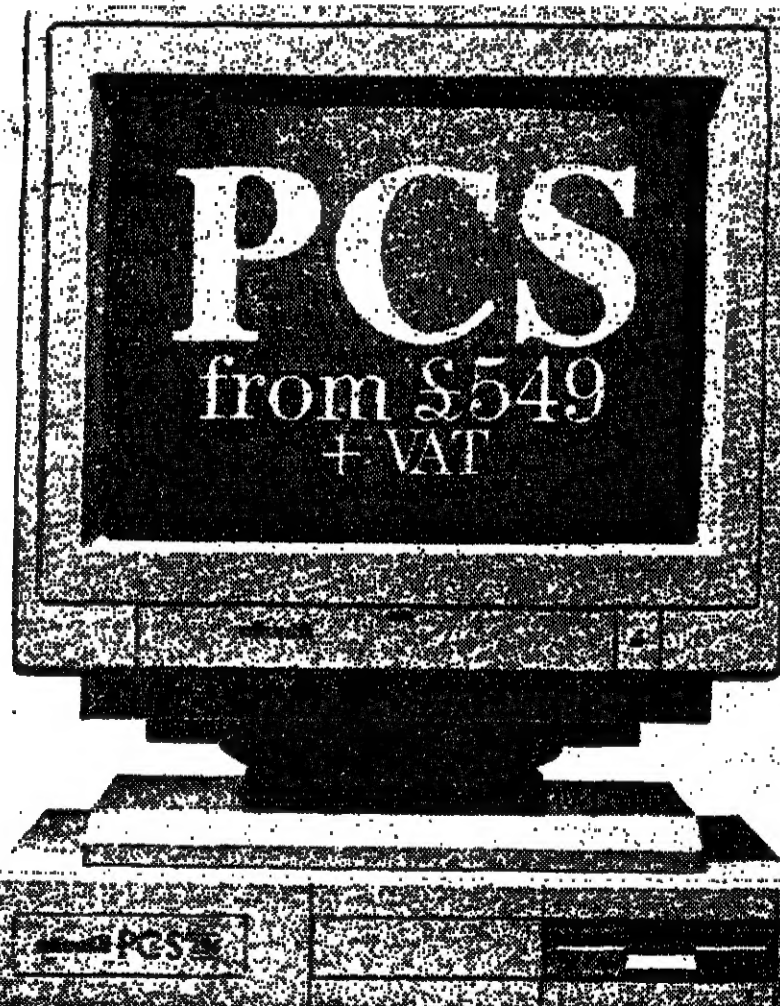
A TECHNIQUE for assessing the climate of the Earth's oceans millions of years ago and predicting global warming can produce widely inaccurate results, scientists have found.

Since the 1960s some geologists have based estimates of ocean temperatures during the last 600 million years on the remains of brachiopods, small bivalves with calcium shells. Ancient temperature patterns determined from the shellfish influence some research on modern climate trends.

If temperature patterns have varied widely in the past then global warming could be a natural rather than pollution-led event, runs the theory. However, a team at Michigan university believes that the technique may have been overestimating ancient seawater temperatures by as much as 15C.

The research, based on an analysis of modern brachiopod shells, has found that the technique, which measured the absorption of oxygen isotopes in the shells, is unreliable. It had been thought this figure could give an accurate seawater temperature.

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Difficult balancing act for ministers as poll tax grant is set

Seven months after the first community charge bills started to go out in England and Wales, opinion polls still show little enthusiasm for the new tax. Wednesday's announcements about capping and government grants suggest that the government remains highly sensitive to the possible impact of local tax bills next year.

In the system with which ministers, councillors and campaigners against the tax are grappling, there is a wafer-thin margin between spending levels that lead to unpalatable charge bills and those that produce politically damaging cuts.

Such is the sensitivity of the system that if, overall, councils exceed the government's assumed spending figure by just 2 per cent, the community charge would have to rise by £20. That may not sound much, but it would be the difference between hitting the government's target of £380 an adult and edging the average charge next year above

the politically sensitive average of £400.

The announcement of total government cash support for each council in England this week was accompanied by a parallel announcement about capping next year. Overall, the increase in central support for local government will rise by just under £3 billion, as announced in July. The distribution of the money, however, will leave some authorities much better off in 1991-2 and others worse off. Capping will be used to ensure that authorities — particularly the high spenders — do not gleefully spend the additional central subvention.

Central support to local authorities comes in two main forms, grants and business rates. In addition, some authorities receive transitional assistance of various sorts. By comparing the total received from the government with what it will receive next year it is possible to gauge how far the council will be under pressure

The announcement about capping and government grants, Tony Travers writes, suggests that ministers remain highly sensitive on the issue

when it comes to set its community charge next year.

An analysis of the distribution of central support shows a relative shift of resources from the North of England to the South. The accompanying table shows, for each region, the change in support in percentage terms and as an amount per adult.

London and the South-East have done particularly well, partly because of the unwinding of the much hated "safety nets" and in part because of complex factors affecting the grant distribution mechanism. The North and Yorkshire have done badly because authorities there have lost "safety net" and other support.

The results of this reallocation

of government funds should lead to relatively high charge increases in authorities in Yorkshire, Tyne and Wear and elsewhere in the northeastern part of England, with the chance of lower increases or even falls in some parts of the South.

Of course, a surge in inflation could push up the charges of all authorities next year. On the assumption, however, that retail prices fall next year towards a rate of 6 or 7 per cent, the government is banking on the fact that the extra central support for authorities, coupled with the new capping powers, will produce an average charge not far from £400 without sharp drops in spending. By

announcing the limitation rules in advance, the government hopes that all councils will choose to spend below the level at which they will be capped. This method of proceeding is not universal capping as such, but it will have almost the same effect as a limit on every authority's spending.

The effect of the rules announced for capping next year will be to hold down the budgets of the highest spenders, while placing much less pressure on lower spending councils. If that impact is placed alongside the allocation of central funding considered above, it is clear that the government wants to see level or falling charge levels in many inner cities, especially in London, while being prepared to tolerate bigger rises in many parts of the North of England.

Because of changes in income from the centre, year-on-year variations in local tax will not relate directly with changes in individual authorities' spending

levels. Capping will almost certainly mean reductions in real spending for a fair number of higher spenders. The usual crop of city authorities are likely to have the greatest need to make such cuts and ministers are aware that dismissing teachers and road sweepers in moderate Labour or even Conservative authorities could be every bit as unpopular as big rises in the charge.

Chris Patten's package of **CHANGES IN SUPPORT PER ADULT**

Region	% (£ per adult)
London	15.2 (£131)
South East	21.1 (£89)
East Anglia	12.4 (£54)
South West	8.7 (£36)
West Midlands	13.6 (£75)
East Midlands	8.4 (£42)
Yorkshire/Humblyside	5.3 (£23)
North West	11.7 (£72)
North	5.0 (£21)
England	12.6 (£71)

* Excluding London Source: CIPFA

port and capping for local government will take effect at a crucial time for the government. The next set of community charge bills and budgets will be presented to the public next March and April. Local elections in some shire and all metropolitan districts take place in May.

This year, there is little doubt that, with the exception of London, the Conservatives had a bad time of the local elections. Community charge must have played a part in cutting the Tory vote.

Next year's elections will be used by politicians in an attempt to assess the public mood. In 1983 and 1987, local elections were influential in determining the timing of the general election. They are likely to be so again next year. Much more than local tax bills hangs on the success or failure of Mr Patten's local government finance settlement.

The author is a research director at the LSE.

Election groups get to work

By NICHOLAS WOOD
POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

MARGARET Thatcher's preparations for the next Conservative manifesto are gathering pace with the first meetings of the policy groups formed to supply ideas for a fourth term in power.

Some have held their inaugural meetings. The others are expected to get down to their work once Parliament returns for the new session on Wednesday.

The prime minister announced the formation of the groups in July. They are broadly structured on departmental lines with cabinet ministers in the chair and with the membership made up of junior ministers, the chairmen of the Tory backbench committees and experts from outside.

Departments with wide areas of responsibility are understood to have spawned more than one group. Some cross-fertilisation is being attempted, with ministers from one department sitting alongside their colleagues from another. The groups are believed to comprise 10 to 20 members.

The groups are operating to a working deadline of early in the new year and most are expected to complete their work by the end of January.

The groups' reports will be studied by a manifesto committee of senior ministers led by Mrs Thatcher.

With Labour enjoying an opinion poll lead well into double figures, however, few Tory MPs expect a general election before next autumn.

Democrats toughen demand for poll reform

By ROBIN OAKLEY, POLITICAL EDITOR

THE Liberal Democrats toughened their stance on electoral reform yesterday, pledging that they would refuse to co-operate in a hung parliament with any party that did not offer electoral reform.

After an all-day meeting of the Liberal Democrat MPs, Paddy Ashdown, the party leader, said: "Electoral and constitutional reform is not a programme or a manifesto point: it is the pre-condition without which no programme for the reconstruction of Britain after Mrs Thatcher can be successful".

That marks an important strengthening of the conditions for any participation in a coalition government by the Liberal Democrats: they would no longer be content with the offer by another party of a referendum on the subject or any other half-way house.

In response to questions, Mr Ashdown said that his MPs, if in a position to do so, would use their votes to bring down any minority government that refused to offer electoral and democratic reform.

He criticised Neil Kinnock, Labour's leader, for being dragged along by his party members on the issue of proportional representation and accused him of trying to sweep the subject under the carpet.

The Liberal Democrat MPs backed a statement from Mr Ashdown in which he said that

any successful post-Thatcher government "must be committed to full participation in the new Europe that will be created at the inter-governmental conferences."

"It must ensure that Britain has the skills and the education system for the new century. It must be prepared to tackle the difficult decisions that we must take to safeguard our environment. And it must create an enterprise economy in which the consumer comes first, competition is strengthened and inflation is under control."

"We also confirmed our view that the essential pre-condition for these, the essential ingredients of a successful post-Thatcher government, is the electoral and democratic reform that can make them happen."

Mr Ashdown confirmed in response to questions that his party would wish to see the inter-governmental conferences to be set up in Rome in December agree on progress to a single European currency and an independent central bank in the EC. Acceptance of the decisions reached by the conferences would be an essential test in terms of the possibility of working with other parties.

The Liberal Democrat leader said: "We are not afraid of, but do not seek, a partnership government". The party's aim remained that of winning government in its own right.



Wash and brush up: With the end of the parliamentary session yesterday, the statue of Sir Winston Churchill in Parliament Square is given a cleaning

Bills go through despite revolts

By SHEILA GUNN, POLITICAL REPORTER

MPs LEFT Westminster yesterday at the close of Margaret Thatcher's third year of her third administration having passed into law 34 government measures.

Rows, revolts and many late nights disturbed the smooth passage of the heavy legislative session. The chief difficulties for the government's business managers came from disputes about community care, dogs, abortion, the fate of Hong Kong citizens and a ragbag Scottish bill. By comparison, they had unexpectedly little trouble in steering through health service reforms, the regulation of human embryo research, law reforms and student loans.

The Queen's speech on Wednesday will unveil a lighter, less politically controversial, programme to give the prime minister the option of calling a general election next year.

The main government acts to become law during the session were:

NHS and community care: to allow hospitals to opt out of health authority control and to become self-governing trusts and to introduce a more competitive climate into the health service. Revolutions on the community care proposals led Kenneth Clarke, the health secretary, to delay his plans.

War crimes: the Lords killed the bill allowing the trial of alleged Nazi war criminals now living in Britain. The government is to reintroduce it next session and use the Parliament acts if necessary to force it through. Ministers are holding talks with legal peers on their objections to the changes in the law.

Hong Kong: an act granting entry rights to up to 50,000 heads of household in the colony. A rebellion by Tory MPs, led by Norman Tebbit, collapsed after second reading of the bill.

Broadcasting: despite disputes about the future of "quality" television, the measure expanding the way for an expansion of television and radio stations went through largely unopposed. The exception was a late government amendment against biased broadcasters. David Mellor, the arts minister, was forced to

re-draft the amendment after a Lords revolt.

Courts: under attack from barristers, Lord Mackay of Clashfern, the Lord Chancellor, was forced to water down his proposals for breaking down restrictive legal practices before introducing the bill. It had an easier-than-expected passage.

Student loans: low-interest loans for university students have been introduced, with the government surviving revolts on the withdrawal of benefits from students.

Environment: the main political parties supported most of the "green" bill to control pollution and to combat litter, although the break-up of the Nature Conservancy Council into national bodies met protests. The most difficult revolts for the government were on four Tory amendments to introduce a national dog register.

Embryology: the Lords vote in favour of research on human embryos up to 14 days old under strict conditions defused most of the dispute on experimentation. The Commons stages were dominated by the government's decision to allow amendments to the abortion law to be added. The act will cut the time limit for terminations from 28 weeks to 24.

Food safety: a largely non-controversial measure to improve standards of food handling and processing.

Employment: the fifth piece of industrial relations legislation. The act bans the closed shop.

Other measures include: improvements to security at airports and ports; a paving bill to reorganise the finances of British Coal; improved protection for public house tenants; changes in the drinking and penal law in Scotland; the privatisation of the management of the Whitehall estate; and giving the vote to residents on Caldey Island and making them liable for poll tax.

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really funny when she
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It should do, because at Thames we take making programmes for children as seriously as making programmes for adults.

This year, as every year for the last twenty two, our

producers have put together a diverse range of

programmes for all ages of children.

Programmes like 'Spatz', a teenage comedy set in a hamburger bar, 'OWL TV' a wildlife series that manages to be educational without remotely looking or sounding like it, and the adventures of 'T-Bag' the witch portrayed by Georgina Hale.

(Her arch-rival Vanity Bag is played by none other than Glenda Jackson.)

Older viewers who have grown up with Thames TV will be pleased to note that alongside these new and innovative programmes they can still find perennial favourites like 'Sooty' and 'Rainbow'.

There will also be more major Thames films made especially for children.

These will include adaptations of Rosemary Sutcliffe's Viking romance 'The Sea Dragon' and R. D. Blackmore's classic love-story 'Lorna Doone' and an animated Russian folk-tale, 'The Fool of the World and The Flying Ship', narrated by David Suchet.

Like last year's Roald Dahl double-bill 'Danny the Champion of the World' and 'The BFG', these

Grown-ups just like the silly jokes. Thames' children's programmes can

be enjoyed by children and adults together.

Certainly, our programmes have won some serious awards at major television festivals all over the world.

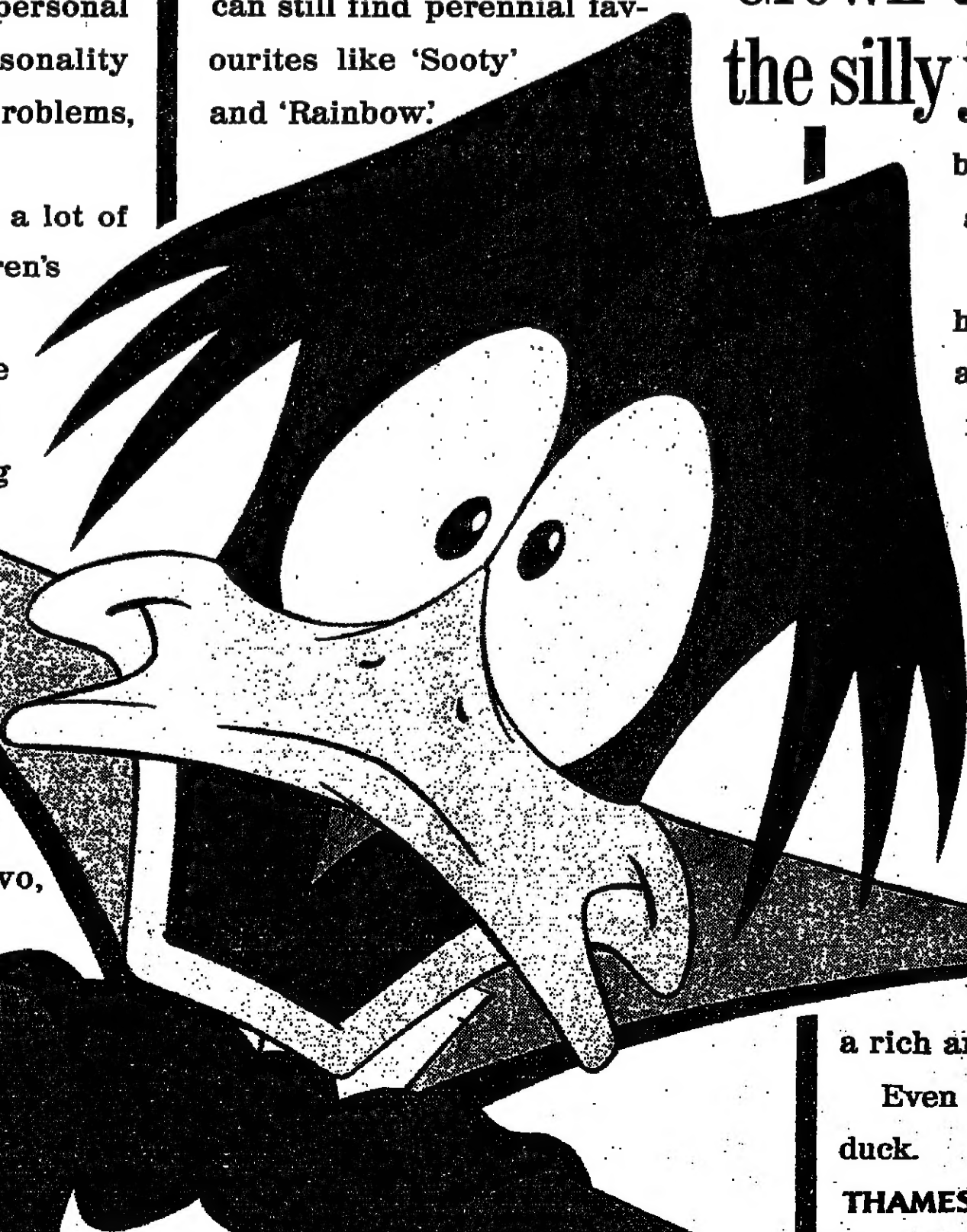
The Prix Jeunesse in Munich, for example, the Prix Danube in Bratislava, the Chicago Children's TV Festival and the Prix Europa in Strasbourg.

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fighting.

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said they had
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and 200
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The rebels
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and 200
civilians in the
area.

Cancer di
'can stay

From the Japan
cancer di
'can stay

A JAPANESE doctor has
ruled that doctors are not
obliged to tell patients they are
suffering from cancer, report-
ing a claim by a doctor's
family that she might be alive
today had she been informed
of her disease.

The ruling will mean that
cancer remains taboo in Ja-
pan, where doctors feel awk-
ward breaking the news to
patients, even though it has
become the country's single
biggest killer.

Court officials said yes-
terday that the high court in
the central city of Nagoya
ruled on Wednesday that re-
formers of Sazuko Makino, a
former nurse who died of
cancer in 1981, aged 50, had
no case against the Japanese
Red Cross Society.

Four of Mrs Makino's re-
latives sued the society on the
ground that they were unable
to save her life because doc-
tors had not told the patient
the family she was suffering
from cancer.

The family said in their suit
that doctors found Mrs Ma-
kino had cancer of the gall
bladder but told her she had
gallstones. Mrs Makino, be-
lieving that she was not seri-
ously ill, stopped visiting the
hospital.

Surveys show that eight out
of ten doctors in Japan lie to

Communal clashes put pressure on Singh to go

FROM CHRISTOPHER THOMAS IN DELHI

SECURITY forces battled to control Hindu-Muslim clashes across the north of India yesterday as the government struggled to deal with the chaotic political aftermath of the assault by Hindu extremists on the ancient mosque at Ayodhya.

Vishwanath Pratap Singh, the prime minister, is under intense pressure to resign. If he refuses, the governing Janata Dal (People's Party) looks certain to split. Devi Lal, the former deputy prime minister who was sacked by Mr Singh for disloyalty, is a leading candidate to take over.

Rajiv Gandhi, leader of Congress (I) and a former prime minister, is anxious to avoid forcing an early general election. His party is willing to support the present government provided that Mr Singh is replaced, arguing that India

cannot risk a poll while it is torn by widespread caste and communal violence. Congress (I) opposes the creation of a national government, but says it is ready to offer constructive support from without.

The party is clearly playing for more time to consolidate its position after its rout in northern India in the last general election less than a year ago. The longer it waits the more assured will be its victory as the issues of prices, Punjab, Kashmir, caste and communalism batter the present embattled government.

Mr Singh will not be easily removed if he refuses to go, since a two-thirds majority in the parliament is needed to topple a leader. The president of the National Front, the five-party body that heads the coalition government, meets today to consider the leadership issue.

The National Front parliamentary party meets on Sunday to discuss the leadership question. Next day the Janata Dal parliamentary party meets. Finally - and this is the acid test - parliament votes next Wednesday on a one-time confidence motion tabled by Mr Singh. He has told President Venkateswarman that he believes he can still command a majority.

The prime minister has been banking on being saved by defections by low-caste and Muslim MPs from Congress (I) and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), a former ally which has withdrawn support from Mr Singh. But there is no serious question that he will lose. Only if a new leader is in place by the time the vote is taken could the outcome be different; if that happened the extremist BJP might even return to the fold with its decisive block of 86 MPs.

The BJP's present preference, however, is to test its strength at the polls while it is riding a triumphant wave in the wake of the symbolic damage inflicted on the mosque at Ayodhya on Tuesday when Hindus attempted to start building a temple on the same site. But the party knows it has no chance of capturing enough seats to form a government.

There are no obvious successors to Mr Singh if he does resign or, which is unlikely, if dissidents muster enough votes to dismiss him. The serious consideration being given to Mr Lal is one of the more bizarre political developments of recent times. He was the chief minister of the small northern state of Haryana, which he ran like a personal fiefdom. He has spent the past few days basking in the sun at his official Delhi residence, seemingly unperturbed by the political chaos around him.

Another contender is Chandrabab Naidu, a long-standing Janata Party member of Congress (I). He has come out firmly against Mr Singh's continuation in the leadership, in effect threatening to split the party unless the prime minister quits.

Violence continued across four states yesterday with Uttar Pradesh bearing the brunt. Hindu-Muslim trouble also flared in Gujarat, Bihar and Andhra Pradesh.

Troops strike at Tamil rebels

FROM VITHA YAPA IN COLOMBO

TWO battalions of the Sri Lankan Army landed on the island of Mannar yesterday among reports that more than 45,000 Muslims have fled the area under threat from Tamil rebels.

The minister of state for defence, Ranjan Wijeratne, said that troops had already started operations to liberate the Mannar area from the rebels.

The Muslims are Sri Lanka's third largest community after the Sinhalese and the Tamils. Their mother tongue is Tamil, but they have associated more closely with the Sinhalese. The rebels have accused them of collaborating with the army in the Eastern province and massacred over 200 Muslims at Eravur and Kankesanthurai in two separate incidents in August.

Mr Wijeratne said that the troops had been unable to move earlier, as they had to avoid a situation of Muslim civilians being killed. He alleged that the Tamils had loaded more than 2,000 Muslims living in the northern Jaffna peninsula into buses and sent them to Vavuniya, about 90 miles south of Jaffna.

Meanwhile in the Eastern province, 11 civilians, seven soldiers and two rebels were killed in two separate incidents. At Vellova in Eastern Trincomalee district, rebels attacked the village and killed 11 civilians and seven soldiers. At Aluth Oya, they shot three civilians, two of them women.

The government announced that the constitution will be amended to enhance fundamental rights, including freedom from arbitrary arrest, detention and punishment, inherent right to life, freedom of information including publication.

Cancer diagnosis 'can stay secret'

FROM JOE JOSEPH IN TOKYO

A JAPANESE high court has ruled that doctors are not obliged to tell patients they are suffering from cancer, rejecting a claim by a victim's family that she might be alive today had she been informed of her disease.

The ruling will ensure that cancer remains taboo in Japan, where doctors feel awkward breaking the news to patients, even though it has become the country's single biggest killer.

Court officials said yesterday that the high court in the central city of Nagoya ruled on Wednesday that relatives of Kazuko Makino, a former nurse who died of cancer in 1983, aged 50, had no case against the Japanese Red Cross Society.

Four of Mrs Makino's relatives sued the society on the ground that they were unable to save her life because doctors had not told the patient or the family she was suffering from cancer.

The family said in their suit that doctors found Mrs Makino had cancer of the gall bladder but told her she had gallstones. Mrs Makino, believing that she was not seriously ill, stopped visiting the hospital.

But doctors are not alone in this conspiracy of silence. Most Japanese patients, unaware that many cancers can be treated if caught early, prefer not to know. Partly because of ignorance, partly because of superstition, cancer carries a great stigma in Japan. Parents try to avoid their children marrying into a family in which someone has had cancer.

The ignorance and the phobia continue, even though cancer remains Japan's leading cause of death. Nearly 27 per cent of all deaths in Japan last year were attributed to cancer. One of those was Emperor Hirohito, who was kept in the dark about his pancreatic cancer throughout his long illness.

The presiding judge of the Nagoya high court, Judge Shigeo Ito, said that the dead woman and her doctor did not share "a relationship of mutual trust" that would have enabled him to disclose the true nature of her condition to her or members of her family.



Riot victims: A family sits amid the ruins yesterday after their home in the Bangladesh port city of Chittagong was destroyed in rioting by Muslim extremists who attacked Hindu temples and other property. Tension grew in Dhaka and throughout the country yesterday as troops and armed police patrolled the streets after a day of communal violence (Ahmed Fazl writes). The authorities imposed an

indefinite curfew in Dhaka after a night curfew in selected parts failed to quell violence. Militant Muslims attacked Hindu places of worship in the old part of the city defying the night curfew. Shops were broken into or set on fire. The 300-year-old Dhakeshwari temple was damaged and another was vandalised. One person was killed and over 60 injured overnight as police fired on a crowd to

prevent looting. More than 100 were arrested. The state-run radio said a curfew had been imposed throughout Dhaka and its suburbs from 4 pm local time. Police with loudspeakers ordered residents to stay indoors. The curfew prevented a planned peace march by opposition political parties, students, teachers and artists in the afternoon. Muslim violence against the minority Hindu community

flared up after a fictitious report in a fundamentalist daily that a mosque at Ayodhya in India which is at the centre of a Hindu-Muslim dispute had been demolished by extremist Hindus. The newspaper *Inquilab* called for an Islamic jihad or holy war against "the enemies of Islam". President Ershad banned the paper but it was allowed to resume publication after publishing an apology.

Muldoon challenge to new cabinet

FROM RICHARD LONG IN WELLINGTON

THE unity of New Zealand's new National Party government was challenged yesterday just minutes after the prime minister-elect, Jim Bolger, announced his new cabinet.

Sir Robert Muldoon, the former prime minister, petulant after being excluded from the cabinet, turned down the position of minister of state, outside cabinet, saying he wanted to be free to criticise the government. Sir Robert, aged 69, who was prime minister from 1975 to 1984, said he wanted the freedom to criticise the government's actions and to "keep the cabinet honest".

"I have been around a long time, and I believe I had something to offer a cabinet," he said. Winston Peters, a Maori and the party's most popular MP, who criticised its hardline economic policy and Mr Bolger's leadership during the election campaign, also signalled that he would continue to speak out even though he had been included in the cabinet. Mr Bolger bowed to party and Maori pressure to include Mr Peters.

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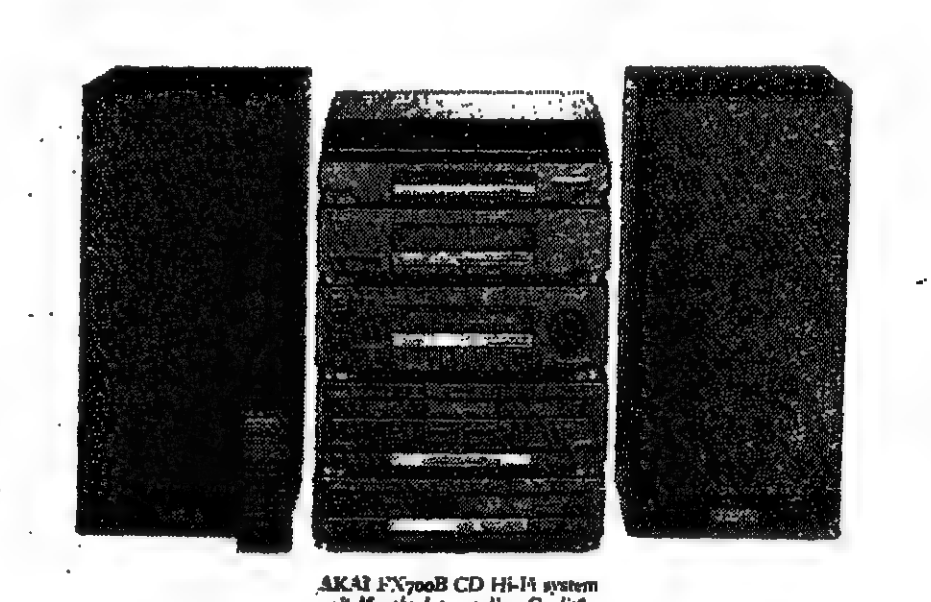
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Runcie urges restoration of links with Damascus

By ANDREW MCEWEN, DIPLOMATIC EDITOR

DR ROBERT RUNCIE, the Archbishop of Canterbury, yesterday joined the families of hostages held in Beirut in urging the government to restore diplomatic relations with Syria.

His move followed signs that the lack of relations may be holding up the release of Terry Waite and John McCarthy, and possibly also Jack Mann. It coincided with the arrival in London of four Iranian diplomats to reopen their embassy after the renewal of diplomatic links with Tehran. David Reddaway, the

British chargé d'affaires in Tehran, is due to meet Ali Akbar Velayati, the Iranian foreign minister, next week. He will ask Tehran to use its influence with Hezbollah, the pro-Iranian group in Beirut believed to hold the hostages.

John Lytle, secretary for public affairs at Lambeth Palace, criticised the government's refusal to talk to Damascus as "a silly way to conduct foreign policy". He said the archbishop and the hostages' families agreed with this criticism. Lambeth Palace is understood to have written

to William Waldegrave, minister of state at the Foreign Office, expressing "astonishment" that Britain had blocked the lifting of European Community sanctions against Syria.

The government wants evidence that Damascus has dropped its support for international terrorism, but Mr Lytle said: "In relations between states, as between people, if you expect people to grovel you make little progress. What matters is that the Syrians are not now involved in organising or sponsoring

terrorism". Philip Robins, head of the Middle East programme of the Royal Institute of International Affairs, noted that Britain had renewed links with Tehran without the death sentence against the author Salman Rushdie being dropped or Roger Cooper, the jailed British businessman, being released. It was therefore difficult to defend the continued rift with Damascus.

Syria had removed from office or blocked the promotion of people who could have been identified with the 1986 attempt to place a bomb on an El Al airliner at Heathrow, and expressed willingness to take action against any Syria-based group proved to have been involved in the Lockerbie disaster. He said Britain might have been expected to resume links with Syria before Iran's decision to renew links with Tehran but not Damascus showed a "special bitterness" which many traced to Downing Street.

A separate effort to persuade the government to change its view on Syria is being made by Robert Adley, Conservative MP for Christchurch and chairman of the British-Syrian Parliamentary Group. He said that Mr Waldegrave had argued that Britain would at least need a private assurance that the Syrian embassy in London would not be used for Middle East terrorism. "I feel this was an extraordinary comment," Mr Adley said.

Douglas Hurd, the foreign secretary, said last week that there was still an obstacle related to the attempt to bomb the El Al airliner. But Mr Adley said he had never been satisfied that the Syrian government was involved.

Pledge by Sharif on Bhutto

Islamabad — Nawaz Sharif, the prime minister-designate of Pakistan, said yesterday that his government will not initiate any fresh charges against the former prime minister, Benazir Bhutto (Zahid Hussain writes).

Mr Sharif, whose nomination was endorsed by more than 160 of 216 MPs, said his government would pursue a policy of tolerance and forgiveness. "But I cannot withdraw the charges on which she is already facing trial," he said. "It is now up to the court to decide. We don't control the courts."

The Pakistan People's Party of Miss Bhutto is meeting today in Islamabad to decide whether to sit in the assembly or to ask its members to resign from it in protest against alleged vote-rigging.

Air escape

Madrid — A Varig airliner bound from Lisbon to Rio de Janeiro with 354 people on board plunged 30,000ft before the crew could bring it under control after a passenger sprayed the pilot with a paralysing aerosol, it was learned here yesterday. The near-disaster occurred over the Atlantic when a Brazilian transvestite being deported from Portugal walked into the cockpit behind a stewardess and squirted the spray into her face and then the captain's, temporarily stunning them both. Other crew members subdued the passenger as the co-pilot brought the plane under control.

Kabul strike

Kabul — Afghan troops attacked rebel bases outside the fortified Kabul airport this week and captured a large cache of rockets and ammunition. It was a large-scale military operation and a number of caves and enemy positions were captured. (AFP)



Home truths: the mother and sister of Omar Sirhan, a Palestinian teenager who murdered three Israelis last week, grieving at their house, demolished by soldiers.

Florida campaign tests a new style of politics

FROM MARTIN FLETCHER IN ORLANDO, FLORIDA

IN A BIG television studio a few miles north of Disneyworld, Bob Martinez, the governor of Florida, indulges in some make-believe of his own. It is midway through the only public debate he has agreed to in this year's gubernatorial contest.

A Republican, Mr Martinez tells the audience that public duty moved him to write to Lawton Chiles, his Democratic opponent, last week demanding to know why he met a dubious Miami businessman in 1987 while chairman of the Senate budget committee.

Mr Chiles, smiling with James Stewart charm, turns to Mr Martinez, the younger man, and says the letter was riddled with base innuendo. It was a perfect example of how negative campaigning works: "Throw enough mud and the other candidate has to spend his time trying to get it off of himself."

He then pulls from his pocket a list of contributors to Governor Martinez's 1986 campaign. There is the name of Charles Keating, America's crook-of-the-moment, in jail on charges of perpetrating serious fraud on customers of his failed savings and loan

institution. "When you throw those eggs, sometimes they blow up in your face," Mr Chiles gently advises his shaken opponent. It was a moment to savour for the man who, in one of the most important contests this year, has been running one of the most perverse and idiosyncratic campaigns.

Tapping into deep popular discontent with politics-as-usual, Mr Chiles has rejected the slick 30-second ads, the electronic image-making, the sophisticated demographic targeting, the spin doctors, the sound bites, the razzmatazz and all the other staples of modern American electioneering and is attempting to win with a grassroots campaign that makes a virtue of its minimalism. "Trust the people" is his war cry.

Mr Chiles first won his Senate seat in 1970 after walking the 1,013-mile length of Florida, earning the nickname "Walkin' Lawton". He quit in 1988, burnt out and disillusioned, but last April, aged 60 and claiming new vision, he announced his political comeback. Declaring big money the root of all evil in US politics, he undertook to accept no donation of more

than \$100 (£51.50). When Ronald Reagan, the former president, flew in for a lavish \$1,500-a-head dinner for Mr Martinez recently, Mr Chiles held a \$1.50 "people's picnic" with hot dogs and Coke at a nearby fairground.

It may be a noble experiment, but Lawton Chiles's campaign has Washington's Democrats clutching the edge of their seats. No gubernatorial contest save California's is as important.

Peter Stothard, page 16



Martinez told that "some eggs blow up in your face"

US school-leavers' exam gets bad marks

FROM CHARLES BREMNER IN NEW YORK

AFTER three years of wrangling amid the outcry over the decline of education in the United States, a team of scholars has produced a new national examination for school-leavers that fails to require them to write a single word of their own but allows them to use calculators for the mathematical questions for which they must provide their own answers.

"This is like rearranging the deck-chairs on the Titanic," Robert Schaeffer, a campaigner for improved standards, said on Wednesday after the College Board announced the first big overhaul since 1974 of the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), now renamed the Scholastic Assessment Test, the nearest thing America has to a national educational yardstick.

Originally designed to provide a standard for assessing university applicants, the SAT has become a rite of passage for most high school pupils

outside some areas of the Midwest. For two decades 17-year-olds have had only to tick off multiple choice answers for every educational skill, from mathematics to comprehension and languages. Computers mark the results.

The tests have come under fire from every side in recent years for superficiality and an alleged bias against racial minorities and girls. Special coaching schools have flourished by teaching pupils the art of test-taking, including the technique of choosing answers by guesswork.

As the College Board worked on its reforms, the United States has been confronted with striking evidence of failure in its schools. In a mathematics and science comparison last year, American children scored last among students in all the other developed countries and several in the Third World.

Nearly a million children graduate from high school

every year unable to read at the level expected of 11-year-olds. Employers, warning of economic catastrophe if education does not improve by the next century, are spending heavily on remedial classes for secondary-school graduates. A telephone company in New York recently rejected several thousand applicants for a handful of low-level clerical jobs because none could summarise a simple paragraph.

In a typical quip, E.D. Hirsch, the author of the best-selling *Cultural Literacy*, recently observed: "The one thing adults can take comfort in is that your 15-to-17-year-old children know less than you do."

The SAT board set out to create a better gauge of analytical ability and one that would hammer home to schools the importance of reading and writing. They were expected, among other things, to introduce at least

one compulsory essay. But the pressures of lobby groups, politicians and more radical educators proved too strong. Most argued that black and Hispanic Americans and recent immigrants would be at a disadvantage.

The main reform is the introduction of an open-ended format for about 20 per cent of the mathematics questions. This means that pupils will have to calculate their own answers without the prompting given by multiple choice. They will be allowed to use calculators, a step that yesterday drew criticism from racial minority groups who claimed that poor children would be at a disadvantage.

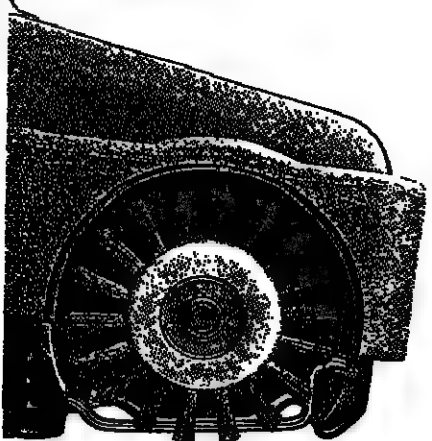
With the failure of the board to introduce any test of self-expression in the SAT, critics were quick to point out the irony of a sample essay question issued by the board this summer: "The more things change, the more they stay the same. Discuss."

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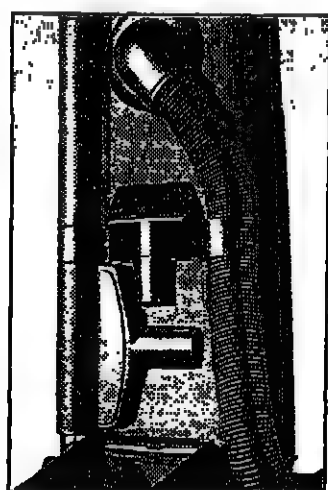
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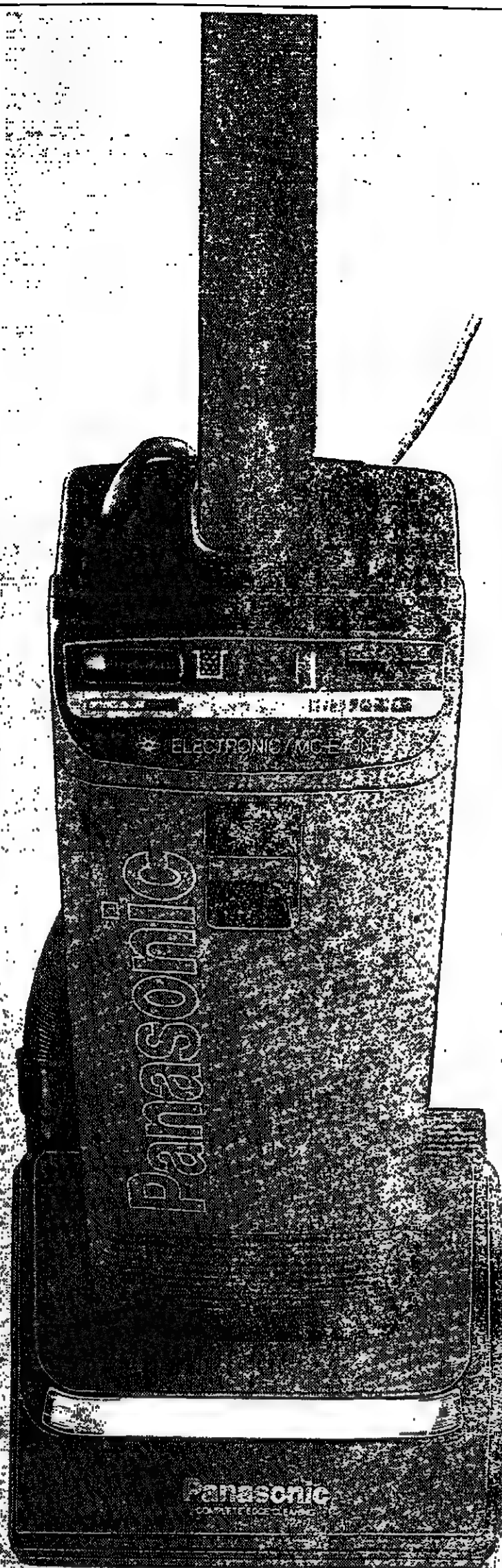
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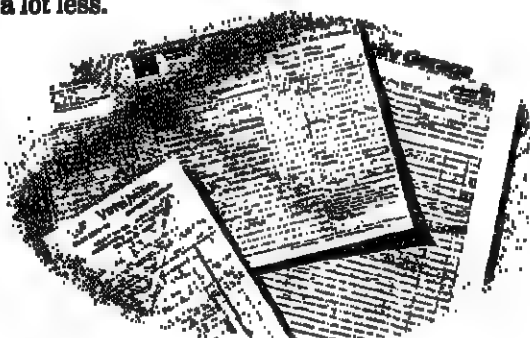
For some motorists, the higher purchase price has been a barrier, preventing them from making the switch to a diesel car.

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COST SAVING VS APR 23.0%	£2,438.04††
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*£2.17 a gallon of 4 star petrol. £1.95 a gallon of diesel. Source: Shell UK 30/10/90. D.O.T. official fuel economy figures for 205GRD: 72.4mpg at constant 56mph; 54.3mpg at constant 75mph; 52.3mpg simulated urban driving. †All prices correct at time of going to press and subject to availability. Metallic paint extra. Includes estimated on the road costs of 11 months Road Tax, Number Plates and Estimated Cost of Delivery but excludes the £200 Introductory Bonus. Cars illustrated 205GRD £9,453.00† and 309GRD £10,925.00†. **Peugeot Talbot Motor Co. Ltd. (Licensed Credit Broker). For a written quotation contact Peugeot Talbot Credit, P.O. Box 300, Churchill Plaza, Churchill Way, Basingstoke RG21 1GJ. Offer subject to status (over 18s only). A guarantor may be required. ††Includes £15 Acceptance Fee payable with first instalment. †††Customer saving v. 23% APR with Peugeot Talbot Credit. Offer applicable for cars registered between September 18th and December 17th provided the bonus voucher is presented at purchase.

Ethnic unrest makes Moldavian independence a poisoned chalice

THE latest bout of ethnic unrest in Moldavia shows how national self-determination has become an open invitation to secession as much within the Soviet republics as within the Soviet Union itself.

Given the rich mosaic of peoples inhabiting Moldavia, its declaration of sovereignty, made in June, could well become a poisoned chalice, for it has provoked the minority Russian and Gagauz populations to demand their own autonomy and may well lead the significant Ukrainian element to call for union with the newly semi-independent Ukraine.

For the long suffering Moldavian majority, the emergence of a vociferous nationalism among the once dominant Russians and the once quiescent Gagauz is seen as part of a sinister Moscow plot to divide and rule in an area

which has been a shuttlecock of history. The Moldavian republic is an artificial creation of Stalin, carved from the body of the Romanian province of Bessarabia which changed hands between Russia and Romania four times until 1918 when it was awarded to Romania.

In 1940, at the same time as he annexed the Baltic republics, Stalin occupied Bessarabia and sought to stamp out the Romanian identity of its majority population by renaming them Moldavians, renaming the province Moldavia, and replacing the Roman alphabet with the Cyrillic one.

After the last war Russian was imposed as the official language and thousands of activists were brought from Russia and Ukraine to communise the republic, diluting in the process

Moldavia shows that self-determination by Soviet republics has opened a Pandora's box, writes Dennis Deletant, as minorities within their borders also seek the right to secede

the Romanian element in the population which was further weakened by mass deportations to Central Asia in the 1950s.

This policy of russification was accelerated, as in other Soviet republics, by enforced socio-economic changes, the most important of which were migration and urbanisation. Between 1960 and 1980 the number of Russians in Moldavia almost doubled to more than 500,000, whereas the Romanian population registered only a natural increase, rising to just over 2,500,000.

Russian predominance in

Moldavia was reinforced by the minorities' use of Russian as their second language, after their native one. Now that predominance is threatened by the adoption in September last year by the Moldavian parliament of a new language law making Romanian the official language and giving Russian a second-class status. Moldavians' assertion of their true identity has been further manifested in the adoption of the Romanian flag and of the Romanian language name of Moldova.

The Russians fear that they will now be at a disadvantage in

the jobs market; the Moldavian parliament has decided for example that all state employees must pass a rigorous Romanian language test. Faced with the loss of their privileged position, the Russians, who form some 13 per cent of the republic's population, called in June for the establishment of their own "Dniester republic".

Their action was copied in August by representatives of the 150,000-strong Gagauz community, an ethnic group unique among the populations of Moldavia. Now Orthodox Christians, their origin is obscure.

One theory holds that they are descended from a Turkic tribe who settled in the area in the 11th century; others believe that they are Turkified Bulgarians who retained their Orthodox religion.

Speaking a language related to Turkish, they were forced to use

the Cyrillic alphabet, and only a handful of works in their language has ever been published. It was not until 1987 that moves were taken to introduce teaching in Gagauz in schools in Moldavia and this official neglect of their culture prompted their parliamentary deputies' call for the setting up of a Gagauz autonomous republic and an appeal to President Gorbachev for support. The Moldavian parliament ruled the Gagauz call illegal and banned the Gagauz Khalky (Gagauz people) movement. Undaunted, the Gagauz deputies declared they would proceed with a declaration of independence. This has now sparked the combustible sentiments of the Moldavians.

A third potentially explosive minority problem involves the 600,000-strong Ukrainian population of Moldavia. Neighbouring Ukraine's own recent

affirmation of its national identity in a declaration of sovereignty can only embolden the Ukrainians of Moldavia to press demands for the safeguarding of their own distinct ethnic identity.

It is tempting to argue that such minority problems will act as a spur to those Moldavian leaders who wish to bury them in a union with the motherland, Romania; however, the Romanian government has its hands more than full with the country's Hungarian minority and for the moment would probably be relieved to be spared further international embarrassment as it seeks to live down the miners' debacle of June.

Dennis Deletant is Senior Lecturer in Romanian Studies, University of London.

Ukraine starts food rationing but fails to issue coupons

From Nick Worrall in Kiev

THE Ukrainian government introduced a tough new rationing system for food and consumer goods yesterday but in such haste that the majority of the 50 million people were unable to buy essentials because they had not yet received coupons.

The scheme has been introduced at a time of dire shortages and public political pressure on the republic's government which have led to an "explosive situation", according to one leading Ukrainian politician.

But many workers will have to wait nearly a week for their coupon sheets, which the government will issue in monthly wage packets. The bulk of state employees are not paid until November 7 while no provision at all has yet been made for non-state workers.

Kiev city council, fearing widespread chaos since the plan to introduce rationing in state shops and enterprises was revealed on Sunday, defied the republic's government by decreeing that bread and milk products should still be available without coupons for a time. Other Ukrainian cities are believed to be considering similar action. Although Ukraine is an important producer of Soviet food, supplies are still short at the best of times, and Sunday's announcement caused a rush to buy up remaining stocks. By Monday afternoon, shelves were virtually empty.

Despite years of promised reform under President Gorbachev, the centralised Soviet state sector still provides the vast bulk of food and goods at subsidised prices, though much appears on the black or alternative market at much higher prices.

In the covered markets, which are exempt from coupons, prices have risen steeply with the prospect that many Ukrainians would be forced to buy there during the chaotic introduction of the rationing system. "I'm only here for the money," said a Moldavian honey

seller at Kiev's big Bessarabian market in the city centre. Sergei Gronik admitted he had pushed up his price from 25 roubles per kilo (around £11 a lb at the official exchange rate) on Tuesday to 40 roubles yesterday. Customers, most of them women, were turning away in disgust at prices none could afford. Most Kiev workers earn about 200 to 220 roubles per month.

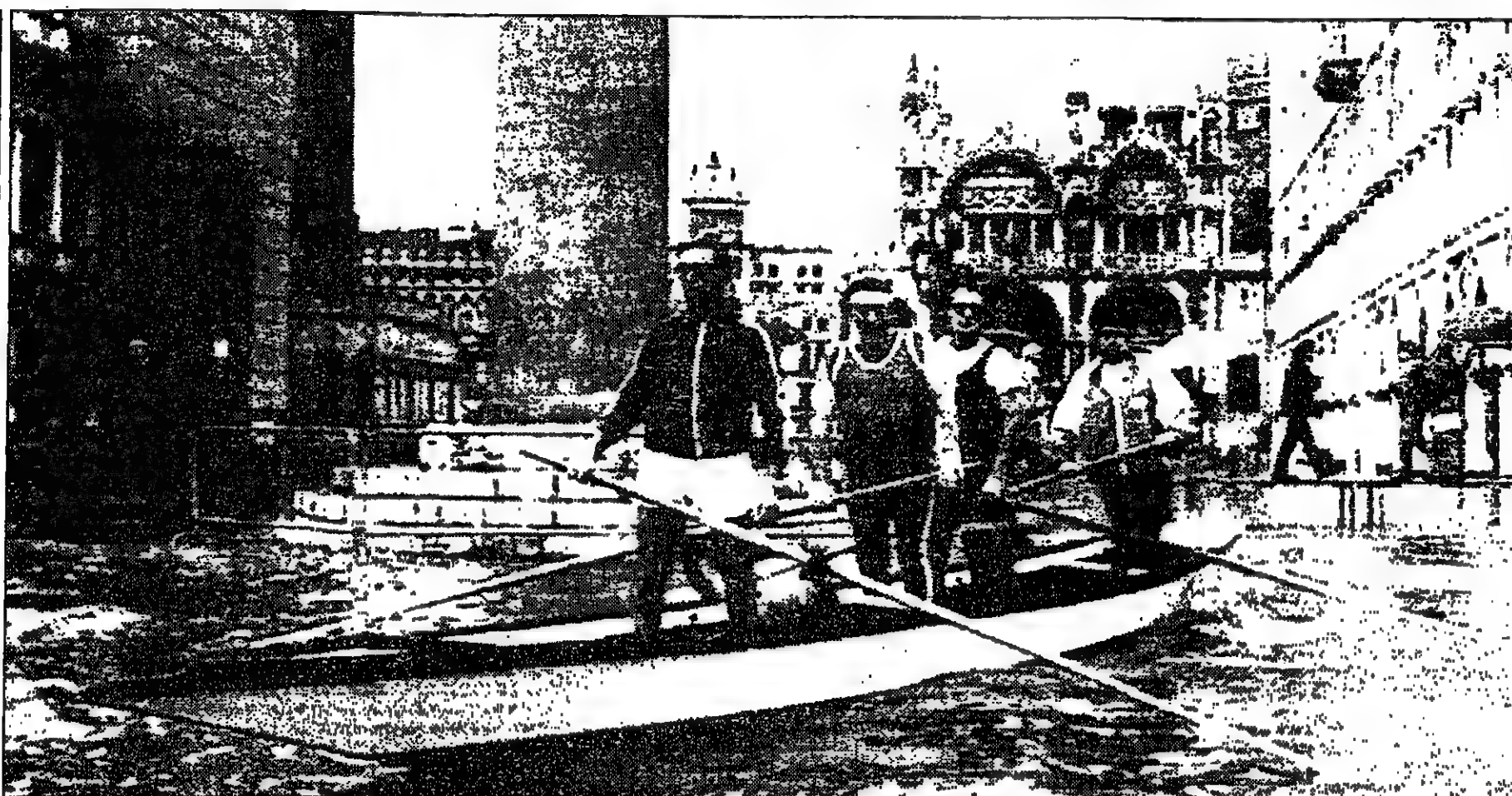
Meat was selling for up to 15 roubles per kilo nearby, five times the price in state shops for similar cuts. Apples were five roubles per kilo, carrots one rouble, a small cabbage cost two roubles and a kilo of poor-looking tomatoes were nearly three roubles.

Petrol is also being rationed. "It's a joke," said one driver. "You can't buy petrol anyway."

The Communist-dominated government has been in disarray since a two-week hunger strike by students demanding economic and political reform resulted in the sacking of the prime minister, Vitaly Masol, late last month. Plans to move towards an independent market economy have foundered on the recalcitrant Soviet state system and the powerful black market.

The rationing plan was first drawn up by Mr Masol. Surprisingly, it is being supported by a member of the democratic opposition, Volodymyr Filipchuk. He chairs the commission set up to investigate transition to a market economy.

Interviewed in the lobby of parliament yesterday, Mr Filipchuk said the scheme had been introduced because of the "explosive situation". He said: "Mafia payoffs are getting bigger and bigger and the atmosphere here is explosive. We have to try to guarantee to people at least the bare minimum during the transition to a market economy. Without coupons people are just forced to buy on the black market at ever-rising prices."



Damp courses: gondollers providing the only means of transport in St Mark's Square on the third day of flooding in Venice, when waters reached 44 inches above normal

First free-market prices hit Romania

From Reuters in Bucharest

TEN months after a popular revolt ended communist rule in Romania, the country yesterday faced its first free-market shocks as the government lifted price controls. November 1 was the date decided for prices to be set according to the law of supply and demand on everything except staple foods, electricity, heating, petrol and rents. Coinciding with the new pricing system, the currency, the leu, was devalued to 35 from 21 against the dollar.

The shift to a market economy is a clear, if painful, break with 45 years of central economic planning. Shop shelves in most areas were largely emptied by panic buying in advance of the change. "There is no other solution, and it is better to do it sooner rather than later," Petre Roman, the prime minister, said on Romanian television on Wednesday night as he sought to dispel public fears

that liberalisation meant an uncontrolled rise in prices, which would be unbearable in a nation where living standards have declined steadily over the past decade.

Mr Roman said the measures were not aimed at the population but at loss-making industries, which had benefited from large subsidies for raw materials. These subsidies would have to go. "Romania's economy is heavily dependent on raw materials and especially energy imports. What we are going to subsidise from now on is no longer resources but finished goods," he said.

Mr Roman's National Salvation Front won a landslide victory in the general election in May and promised to lead Romania towards a market economy and turn it into a Western-style democracy. "This is a crucial moment for our society and the most radical

economic change since the December revolution," he said in his broadcast.

The parliamentary reaction was mixed. The opposition National Liberal Party generally backed the measures but had serious reservations about guarantees on social security. The government has announced wage indexation, with monthly compensations of 750 lei for those in work and 400 lei for pensioners as prices for non-essential foods, drinks, consumer goods and services are allowed to float.

Radu Campeanu, the Liberal party leader, said: "This is not a liberalisation but a readjustment of prices in keeping with economic realities. But people are not prepared and might take it badly against the background of our economic and social crisis."

Public reaction was mixed. The young seemed more willing to

accept the measures. "Financially speaking, the measure is difficult but welcome," Stelian Petrescu, aged 28, a geologist, said. But Dumitru Ispas, aged 46, a driver and father of three, said: "I will be compelled to go on stealing from the state to be able to make a living. I'm already contemplating going to work abroad, maybe in Africa."

After the ending of four decades of communist censorship last December, Romanian state television is next month to broadcast its first political satire, sponsored by the Liberals. In the show, called Zoo-Pol, animal puppets will portray government and opposition figures prominent since the uprising which toppled Ceausescu, a party spokesman said. A lynx wearing a miner's helmet, alluding to last year's rampage by miners in Budapest, will represent President Iliescu.

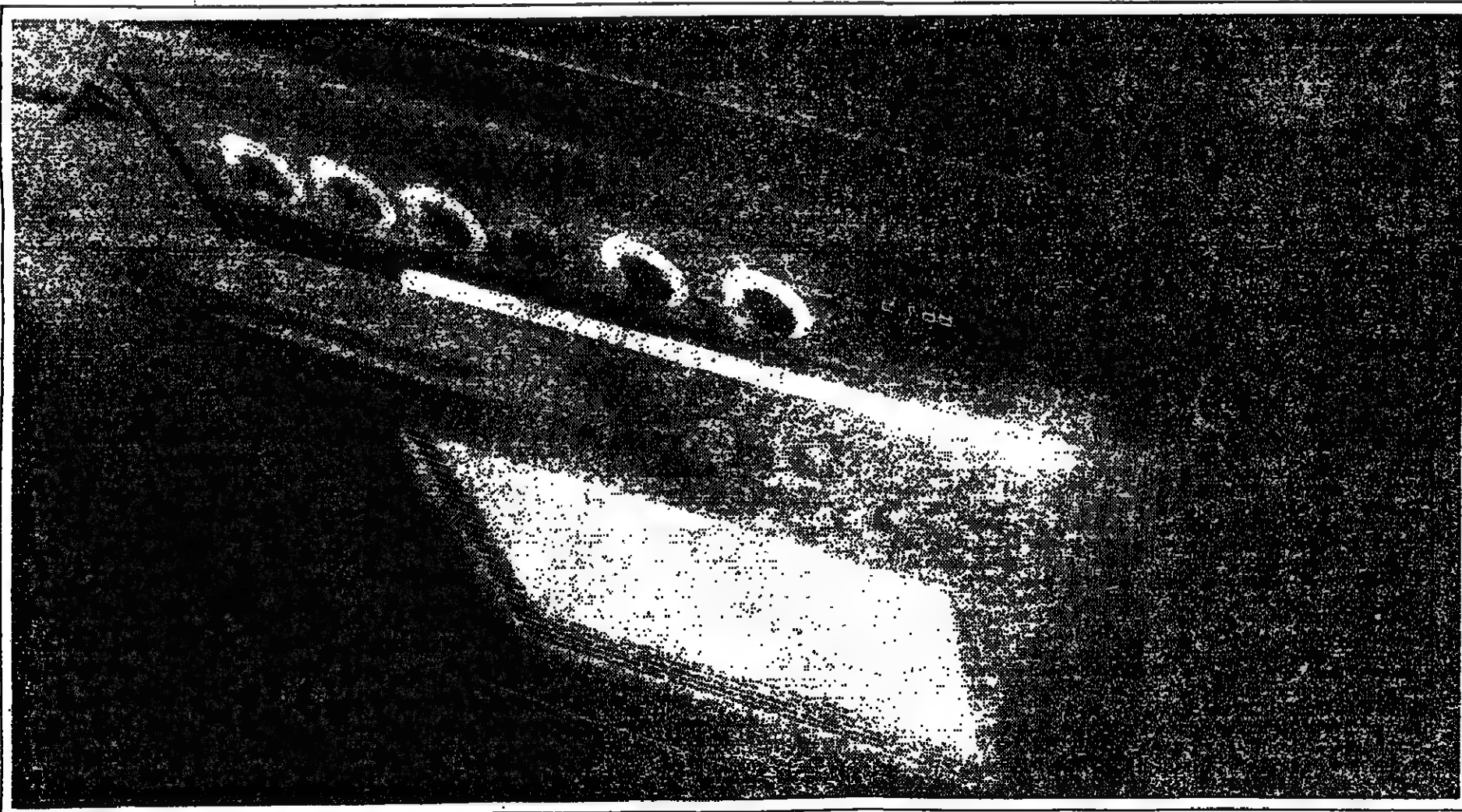
Inefficiency eats into rich harvest

From Reuters in Moscow

THE Soviet Union has had a record grain harvest this year but up to a quarter of crops were lost in some areas due to storage and transport problems, a senior official said yesterday.

Leonid Vashchukov, of the State Statistics Office, told Pravda the harvest would total 240 million tonnes, surpassing the previous record of 237 million, set in 1978. The figure confirmed estimates issued last month by a government official. Last year's harvest was 211 million tonnes.

Mr Vashchukov acknowledged losses of 20 to 25 per cent of crops in certain areas due to problems with labour, fuel, transport and storage.



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Phantom of the paradise

Philip Howard

Cloud-cuckoo-land is the cliché of the week. The prime minister used it to handbag European monetary union. Picking up the nice knock-down phrase, the director-general of the CBI said that the TUC was still stuck in the Seventies, somewhere close to cloud-cuckoo-land. Both of them got the term wrong. It is not surprising that the other European heads of state were confused about exactly what Mrs Thatcher had in mind, though I daresay that her wild, wild eyes and tone of voice gave them a good idea.

Cloud-cuckoo-land is an old joke. It is a grossly misused word, widely misused and useful for the instant images that politicians manipulate. It has become a derogatory vogue term, supposed to mean a silly sort of place, part away from the birds, part cuckoo, part castle-in-the-air, and wholly undesirable. That is mildly what the prime minister thinks of European union. Before the nonsense goes any further, it is worth recalling that the original cloud-cuckoo-land was a very desirable and highly successful state, the ancestor of our Utopia and never-never land.

It was a city built on air as a stronghold for the birds above the plain of Phlegra in Greece. The *Birds*, a comedy by Aristophanes, was first performed at the great Dionysia festival of 414 BC. It tells the story of an ingenious Athenian called Persuader, who gets the birds to build a city in the clouds, and so compels the besieged gods, cut off from their food of sacrifice, to accept humiliating terms.

As it was being played, the imperial Athenian navy, the most formidable armament that had ever issued from a Greek harbour, was sailing across the known world to a remote island in the far south west. It was an expedition far more fearful than the Falklands campaign, and it was on collision course with disaster. Even the dimmest member of the audience could grasp the satirical connection between the visionary ambitions of the birds and the imperialist ambitions of Athens. Perhaps Aristophanes' masterpiece took only second prize because of Athenian jingoism and Gotha headlines in the pop press of the day.

Nephelococcygia, cloud-cuckoo-land, was indeed fantastic, but in the play it is crowned by brilliant success. It is shown to be a better place than either Athens or heaven itself. For example, entrance is refused to common informers, chat-show hosts, tabloid journalists, libel lawyers, weather forecasters and other plagues of society then and now. By surrounding itself with strict customs barriers and tariffs, cloud-cuckoo-land sets an archetypal example for Fortress Europe. The flavour of the first cloud-cuckoo-land in *The Birds* is far-off, paradisaic, infinitely desirable and

greatly preferable to the ugly here and now. This is not the impression the prime minister gives of her attitude to European union. In Athens 24 centuries ago, there was disaster in the air. The first great European civilisation was about to crash in its Sicilian expedition. Cloud-cuckoo-land is a charming and wistful fantasy of better times and better places, somewhere over the rainbow.

Nevertheless, we are all Europeans, and it is no bad thing for our politicians, who are widely perceived as tunnel-visioned philistines (as they were also by Aristophanes), to refer to the roots of our common literature. They do not even need to cock it up. (Cloud-cuckoo-land was dedicated to the Persian Prince Cock, the god of war of birds.) There are plenty of apposite topical references to our present troubles in *The Birds*. For example, I cast Jacques Delors as the oracle-monger, who speaks self-seeking prophecies in high-flown Enrobbable: "Dear girl, divinely inspired, if thou dost as I bid, thou shalt surely / Soar in the clouds as an eagle, refuse, and thou ne'er shalt become an / Eagle, or even a dove, or a woodpecker tapping the oak tree."

After a referendum Persuader prophesies back: "But when an impudent scoundrel cometh uninvited and maketh himself a bloody nuisance to them that do carry out the sacrifice, and asketh of a share of our money, then shalt thou sock him hard between the ribs with thy handbag." Then at the end of *The Birds* a delegation arrives from the gods to sue for peace. With the other European heads of state comes an uncouth figure from a rude and faraway land, who dresses in a funny way, and cannot speak intelligibly. In the play he is Triballus, God of the Thracians. Today, I cast him as Gianni De Michelis, the Italian foreign minister, who wears clothes that would not do in Finchley, keeps on getting snarped in indignified company in nightclubs by paparazzi, and is so very disrespectful about our prime minister.

Not all the Utopian qualities of cloud-cuckoo-land are helpful. It is not just that there will be no hard Ecu up there. There will be no money at all. And private property will be abolished. But one obvious echo from the play is the heroine. At the end, Persuader demands from the gods as his bride Mrs Sovereignty, the beautiful Miss Whiplash, warrior queen who rules the world. She descends, radiant in her wedding dress, bearing the thunderbolt of Zeus. In his allegory, Mrs Sovereignty represented for Aristophanes a return to paternalistic Toryism from the populist demagoguery that he thought had ruined Athens. The world has changed. But I daresay we could find someone somewhere whose head would fit that old wedding tiara.

...and moreover

ALAN COREN

Can it really be but one short week since Englishmen were running their gardens, crying: "How horrible, fantastic, incredible it is, that we should be digging trenches and trying on baggy trousers here because of a deep depression over a far-away ocean between two occluded fronts of which we know nothing?"

Strange it was, that Pre-Wind period. I did not myself dig any trenches, having replaced all my fences after the Last Lot, thereby obviating the need, when storm clouds once more threatened this island race, to sink concrete stanchions as per my esteemed order, bolt 4x4 uprights thereto, attach 20 lengths best feather-boarding, creosote and make good to highest finish, remove all rubbish from site and go bankrupt. But all around me, last Friday, the gardens rang with the noise of spade on kneecap as frantic neighbours dug in against the imminent onslaught.

I did, however, a lot of batten down. Who dared not, given the hourly alarms of Met Office windmongers still singing, three years on, from meteorology's Pearl Harbour? Quite how far up the mobility-scale to batten was another matter: clearly, notes should not be placed in milk-bottles, nor even milk-bottles on steps, but how about, say, crated milk-bottles? Should crates be lashed to gates? Or dustbins: since the First Great Hurricane, when lids flew like Frisbees, our old bins had all been replaced by wheelies. True, their lids were attached, but who could assess their potential for instability? Might they, when the typhoon struck, begin to roll? Was our hill looking at a Sorcerer's Apprentice situation? But if we moved our kerbside cars out of the way of the hurtling charge, it could only be back into the driveways from which we had already moved them out of the way of the falling slates.

How much of a tree should one lop? Was it riskier to crawl out and rope a dodgy chimney than to let the bricks fall where they may? Should hanging baskets merely be lowered to the ground and left, or brought indoors against the possibility that they might gradually rock

themselves across the lawn and through the lower panes of the greenhouse? What of the greenhouse itself — did one open its doors to prevent the wind's shattering it, or shut them to prevent the wind's blowing everything that was inside outside?

You did what you could, you went to bed, and you lay awake, ears cocked and trembling for the blitz. You did this three nights on the trot. But nothing happened. It was the Phoney Wind. On Monday, the Met Office confirmed that no blue birds had been blown over the white cliffs of Dover. Johnny could sleep in his own little room again. You were no longer advised to tether him to the boiler.

The days grew so calm and sunny, indeed, that I decided to paint the front door. I had been planning this for some time, but the propitious moment had not hitherto offered itself. Now it had. We had come through. The door that might have blown off had not even been invited to rattle. A celebration was required.

The paint went on a treat: when I stood back at last, the finish was impeccable. So smooth, so lustrous, that, were a vacancy suddenly to occur in the ranks of Joan Collins's *maquillage* team, I could have taken the door round as a reference. Leaving it to dry, I went in and poured myself a congratulatory Scotch. As I did so, the latch of the back door rattled. I looked through the window, but there was no one there. While I was looking out, a leaf flew by, and then another. The back door rattled again, and blew open.

By the time I got to the front door it resembled nothing so much as a kindergarten nature-table. There were sycamore seeds stuck to it, and little berries and a variety of insects so catholic as to whet even the most jaded entomological palate. I got the bumblebee off, because it was still in working nick, but as it flew away I could not forbear a sneer at a creature so dumb as not to appreciate the risk of being blown into a freshly painted door.

Fancy not knowing that a wind can suddenly come up out of nowhere.

Frances Gibb on the latest attempt to make the law match the way we live now

Divorce fit for a modern marriage

The proposals published yesterday for divorce reform, the biggest overhaul of the law in England and Wales for more than 20 years, come at a time of widespread concern at the levels of marriage breakdown. Last year more than 150,000 couples divorced in England and Wales, and on current trends it will not be long before 40 per cent of marriages can be expected to end in divorce, with a quarter of children under 16 affected by the experience.

The consensus of recent years has been that the divorce laws are confusing and misleading, unjust and discriminatory to couples who are less well-off, and likely to provoke needless hostility and bitterness through the role of fault (nearly three-quarters of divorces are based on adultery or unreasonable behaviour). Finally, the law does nothing to save marriages, where that might be possible, and it can make matters worse for children by forcing couples to make accusations and dwell on the past rather than sorting out the future. Reformers have therefore

tried to close the gap between divorce laws and reality.

There is a history of similar attempts. The last big review was in 1965, which led to the present legislation, enshrined chiefly in the Divorce Reform Act 1969. This was a big improvement on what had gone before. Its aim, as now, was to remove the bitterness and distress caused by the need to prove what was called a matrimonial offence. Hence the new principle was born of irrevocable breakdown of marriage as the sole ground for divorce. But fault persisted. Irrevocable breakdown was to be inferred from one of five grounds, three still involving fault.

Yesterday's proposals finally sound the death knell of fault. Under them, the sole ground remains irrevocable breakdown of marriage, but this is to be proved by the passage of a 12-month minimum period in which couples must sort out all arrangements of custody and finance. Only then will the divorce order (no more decrees) be granted.

Will the proposals succeed? The consultation process over the past

two years has been dogged by criticisms either that divorce would be made easier or harder. It is a debate that has plagued discussion of divorce over the centuries. At the centre of this has been the extent to which church or state should limit the rights of individuals to end their marriages. In fact, for much of recorded history, neither church nor state played a role in divorce. The common feature of pre-Christian marriage, whether Roman, Anglo-Saxon, Celtic or other, was the relative ease of divorce.

Only with the rise of Christianity did control come. The right of divorce, which until about the 10th century was in most places a domestic and private matter, was gradually eroded. With the Reformation, the power Rome had taken was reduced in many countries, but the state exercised authority in its place. John Milton, lamenting the restrictive divorce laws, urged a return to what he saw as England's lost heritage of liberal divorce before the Norman conquest.

Yet not until this century did

the divorce laws move back towards control by the married couple. With the latest reforms, the state's role will be further reduced: courts will not be required to adjudicate on fault, but will help couples sort out the future.

The huge increase in divorce is not a sign of the breakdown of the family, but a measure of how it has become more accessible and cheaper, no longer the preserve of the upper middle classes. Since 1939 the number has grown from 10,000 a year to 58,000 in 1979 and about 140,000 at the end of the Seventies. Legal aid, the 1969 act, better assistance for divorced wives and general affluence have all been factors.

But if divorce is now available, is it — some ask — too available? Would the new proposals make divorce easier or harder? Any reform must steer a path between the critics in both camps. Mindful of this, the Lord Chancellor, to whom a divorce bill would fall, has in recent months softened the ground for the report's appearance. Divorce over time, he has

said, which requires couples to consider children and their future first, is not an easy option.

The Law Commission's own answer is that the proposals encourage a new approach which might be harder for some, easier for others. In particular it will be easier for couples who now are forced to separate for years before petitioning for divorce, but harder for those who would not be able to dissolve the marriage as quickly as now.

The argument about ease or difficulty is not central to the spirit of the reforms, however. The reformers say they are not so naive as to believe that laws can either hold marriages together or cause them to fall apart; nor that good laws can remove all pain from divorce. They can, however, reduce the anguish involved. By reducing the conflict, the Commission says, the reforms should minimise harm to children, and encourage parents to look to how they can best meet their responsibilities in the future, rather than dwelling on the unhappiness of the past.

America swaps spin doctors for a doctor of philosophy

In normal times, Dr John Silber would not be favourite for the governorship of Massachusetts. He is a Texan philosopher whose first love is Immanuel Kant. He likes to solve problems from original principles, dismissing most current ideas with a thrust of his withered hand and a withering gaze. In his personal manner he affects the austerity of Socrates, his other hero. To an electorate that has been wooed for decades by honeyed words and handouts, this year's Democratic candidate ought long ago to have been political "dead meat" for the gulls of Boston harbour.

But these are not normal times. Massachusetts has a hole in its heart after the collapse of the machine that Michael Dukakis built. Economic miracles have been revealed as mirages. The proud state of the early Puritans has become a joke, and it wants someone to make it serious again.

In the year since he took campaigning leave from the presidency of Boston University, John Silber has broken every rule in the party back's handbook. He has talked of "the phenomenal racism of Jews". He has called his adopted state "a welfare magnet" for immigrants. He has written off one section of the electorate as so riddled with drug addicts as to be not worth speaking to. He has blamed working women for neglecting their children. He has suggested that when the old are "ripe to go" it is foolish to waste money keeping them alive.

When questioned about his so-called "Silber shockers", he does not back off in the time-honoured manner of the professional politician. He backs up his assertions by appeals to unclouded thinking and the application of favourite fundamentals of thought. He uses Kant to set high standards of personal behaviour, invoking the "categorical imperative" that moral actions are those whose guiding maxim can be universally enjoined. In his book-length manifesto entitled *Straight shooting — what's wrong with America and how to fix it*, he writes that there is not one logic for scientists, another for bookmakers and physicians, another for artists and politicians. "There is one ethic, one set of principles for the guidance of human conduct."

Not surprisingly, the prospect of a philosopher-governor has filled



Peter Stothard, US editor, on the rise of John Silber (above), the likely governor of Massachusetts after Tuesday's election and a man with ambitions to reform the nation

some sections of the state with alarm. All politics is about horse-trading, but Massachusetts politics is one of the biggest markets in the nation. "I could see John Silber taking Kant to Tennessee," said a former colleague, "but to Boston... The mind boggles."

To others, John Silber is the straight-talking incorruptible who is set to purge them of the spirit of his disgraced predecessor. In this year's Democratic primary the electors threw out virtually everyone who had ever met Michael Dukakis. Now is the time, they say, to finish the job.

What can they expect? And will Dr Silber, if he succeeds in straightening the mores of Massachusetts, be casting his eye further afield, to "fixing" everywhere else too? Those are the questions now exercising the powers of the Democratic party. The campaign itself has dulled in recent days.

There have been no new "shockers". The Republican candidate, William Weld, a wealthy paragon insider whose wife is a Roosevelt, has given up the falling fight to show Dr Silber as a maniacal know-it-all. Instead the two men slug it out on television over the details of the city budget. The Democratic lead in the polls, aided by the national trend, has stretched until a defeat for Dr Silber next Tuesday would be considered a shock in itself.

So, what will victory mean? Dr Silber sets out in his book a case for radical changes, particularly in American education. He wants children to be taught in the manner of a hundred years ago by means of moral maxims. "If wishes were horses, then beggars would ride" is his favourite, followed by "the idle fool is whipped at school" and "Queens and kings must die in the dust".

He wants huge state investment in pre-school education to right the wrongs of a society in which, quoting Juvenal, "luxury is more ruthless than war". He wants junior schools to stay open from 7am to 6pm. He is not afraid of advocating big expenditures but also wants a 25 per cent cut in federal employees over five years and a balanced budget. How will he do it all? By cutting waste, and by using his aggressive mind to convince the unbelievers that he will do the cutting with his own hands, if he needs be.

Dr Silber makes two claims as a philosopher. The first is that it is hard to pull the wool over his eyes; the second is that he has a clear grip of purpose and priority. Some of America's troubles stem from a simple failure to grasp the real difficulties of democracy, he claims. So, in addition to the precepts of Kant, he likes to cite

the problems of Shakespeare's *Coriolanus*. How can heroic ideals be best matched to the whims of the mob? "More study makes Massachusetts a better state", that is a supreme Silber motto.

If he succeeds in any of his high aims to restore competitiveness and confidence in state and country he will certainly be a rarity. Strong marriages of practical politics and philosophical theory are not frequent in British and American life. Arthur Schlesinger wrote books of philosophy seeking to persuade his supporters that since nothing could be proved about anything they might as well continue with their old Tory prejudices. The anti-Platonism of Richard Crossman contributed little to Labour governments and a lot to Crossman's isolation. Labour's most formidable professional philosopher, Bryan Magee, was accused out of politics altogether. In America there is the lowering example of Thomas Jefferson, but similarities with Dr Silber stop at the shared troubles with their right arms.

In the Boston suburbs this week liberal critics were kinder to liken Dr Silber to Mussolini, stressing the men's liking for moral authoritarianism, ambitious public projects and the sound of their own voices. Supporters countered that this was a ridiculous slur; that Dr Silber is a genuine conservative intellectual who respects the institutions he is trying to reform.

At Boston University, whose reputation Dr Silber has greatly improved during his two decades in office, students debated the difficulty of applying Kantian principles, such as the absolute ban on lying, to the political process. "The principles themselves may be fine," said one. "The trouble is in deciding how they should be used, what other factors should be taken into account. John Silber thinks that things are absolute which are really just his opinion. The logic then becomes just rhetoric. That's what's frightening."

Frightening or not, Dr Silber has already done something for politics in America. Next Tuesday, in polls that include congressional elections, there are races between old-timers and new spenders and tax-cutters, bums and bandits. But there is not another contest in which Kant would even get a look in unless he were spelt with a "C".

Blood on the carpet

The Old Lady of Threadneedle Street, living some-what in the shadow of the old man of the Bundesbank these days, has had an additional indignity heaped on her head: she has been accused of unpatriotic behaviour. A decision to award a £100,000 carpeting contract to a Dutch manufacturer has prompted strenuous protests from the ailing British carpet industry.

The disclosure that the floors of the Bank of England's new registration centre in Gloucester will be covered by ESCO of the Netherlands comes to light on the day that 1,000 workers at the Kidderminster carpet division of Colovoll lose their jobs. Nicholas Ridley, the former trade secretary, has written to Sir Robin Leigh-Pemberton, the bank's governor, taking up the complaint of angry contractors in his constituency that British and other European manufacturers were excluded from the tender document.

His intervention elicited the assurance from the bank that the details in the tender document, specifying Dutch carpet, were not set in concrete. Leigh-Pemberton wrote: "The tender document for supplying and laying the carpet will shortly be issued, specifying ESCO. This is a product, the quality of which is already very familiar to us from its use in other premises, and can be obtained at a most competitive price. The tender process does not, however, preclude tenderers offering alternatives of suitable quality and design."

But before the deadline for tendering had expired, a letter of intent was sent to the ESCO sales office at Abingdon.

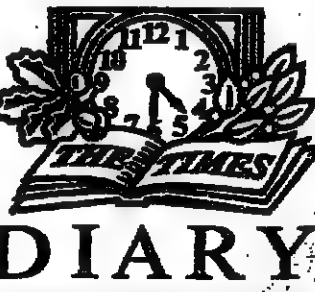
A spokeswoman for the Bank of England tried to soothe passions: "It's our policy to shop around. You would not expect a British institution to do otherwise."

While the House of Lords murses its disappointment in the face of the defeat of the dog registration bill, peers might be interested to hear of the *Soviet solution to the problem of stray dogs*. The eastern Soviet town of Ust-Kamenskaya has issued a system of rewards for those nimble enough to catch stray dogs. The capture of one stray dog equals a 10 kopek reward, 10 dogs equal a vacuum cleaner, 50 hounds a fridge, and those who achieve a century can shuffle home with a colour television.

Pandit-panned

The combined forces of Mrs Thatcher and the Queen have failed to stir Britain's Indian community into enthusiasm for funding the new Nehru gallery at the Victoria and Albert Museum. The 800,000-strong Indian and south-east Asian community here has so far contributed about £100,000 to the £2.2 million cost of the gallery, to house 30,000 pieces of art from the sub-continent when it is opened this month by the Queen.

"We are slightly disappointed," admits Julie Laird, director of the appeal, launched by the prime minister. "We are still approaching people as they seem to take a long time to make up their minds. They like to find out what each other is thinking and doing."



DIARY

The largest donations have come from British companies, headed by the Oppenheimer Charitable Trust and British Aerospace. "Many Indians are orientated towards giving to people rather than to art," says Laird. "We are hopeful that when they see the educational value of the gallery for their children, who have never seen their own country, they will contribute more."

Par espion

The last refuge of a scoundrel is not, it seems, patriotism, but a five-kopek stamp. Kim Philby is to be posthumously honoured with four other Soviet spies in a set of two million stamps to be issued at the end of the month. "Soviet intelligence agents have proved very popular," say the postal authorities there, perhaps anxious to beef up KGB credibility after the knocking of Soviet secret service system has taken at the hands of Oleg Gordievsky among others.

Though they may be adventurous with their own stamps, the Russians were more circumspect last month with their postage stamp produced jointly with the

United States. The 25-kopek stamp featured the cosy marine world of sea otters, dolphins, and sea lions.

"I'll swap you a dolphin and two otters for a mole."



GED

Alimentary, my dear

A new housekeeper is sought at Sherlock Holmes' residence, transplanted from 221b to 239 Baker Street. She will no longer be required to humour the violin-playing, meerschaum-puffing lodger whose movements could never be forecast from one moment to the next, but she will have to be on call to supply information about the great man to a steady stream of visitors from all over the world. She will also have to become accustomed to being addressed as Mrs Hudson.

A spokesman for the Sherlock Holmes' Museum, which is advertising the job, says: "Mrs Hudson looked after Holmes for some 25 years. She worked hard and put up with a lot. The duties today are easier." If the successful applicant has a fine palate, she will be pleased to know that the tea she

will be brewing up for visitors is Mazawattee — "Queen Victoria's favourite cuppa". The salary is not specified, but it is unlikely to be the " princely sum" that the real Holmes paid the real Mrs Hudson — sufficient, according to Conan Doyle, for her to buy the premises.

Nature, red...

The National Trust is seeking revenge on the Open Spaces Society, the country's oldest national conservation body, for having the temerity to call the Trust an elitist organisation devoted to the protection of a prize collection of dinosaurs. Rodney Legg, chairman of Open Spaces, made the remarks last week at a lecture organised and paid for by the National Trust to mark the society's 125th anniversary.

The Trust's fury about the criticism, aired in the ornate surroundings of the Great Hall of the Royal Society of Arts, was compounded when it was reported on the front page of *The Times* the next day. Now the Trust has sent a letter to Open Spaces asking it to share the cost of the lecture.

Warren Davis, press and public relations manager of the National Trust, wrote complaining about the loss of £345, the cost of booking the hall. "In the circumstances I wonder if Open Spaces Society is likely to consider making a contribution towards the deficit?"

Kate Ashbrook, general secretary of the society, retorted: "We are not going to be making a contribution. The Trust never asked for one before the meeting. They are obviously still sore at the criticism. I cannot understand why. When did they last make the front page of *The Times*?"



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SIR GEOFFREY RESIGNS

The departure of Sir Geoffrey Howe from the government removes from high office the last of Margaret Thatcher's original cabinet of 1979. While his going has been on the cards since his dismissal from the Foreign Office last year, the break remains a dramatic one for its personal as well as political implications. Mrs Thatcher may tower over her party as she towers over all she surveys. But her tower is an ever more lonely one.

Sir Geoffrey was a closet Thatcherite even before Mrs Thatcher arrived to lend her name to free-market Toryism. His legal rigour underpinned the supply side reforms first plotted by Edward Heath and his "Selsdon" comrades in 1969-70. He fought, and failed, to achieve trade union reform in the early 1970s. He then emerged as the progenitor of a (relatively) ruthless monetarism as Mrs Thatcher's economic right-hand man.

As Chancellor of the Exchequer throughout her first administration, he was, even more than the prime minister, the architect of the deflationary policies that were intended, alongside supply side reform, to "shake out" inefficiency and uncompetitiveness from British industry. His 1981 budget, an event of Crippsian severity, brought his leader close to political catastrophe by the end of that year. But she was rescued by the Falklands war and the cautious pre-election reflation of 1983. Mrs Thatcher was often wistful that Sir Geoffrey at this time. He was the archetypal dry. These were years of Howism, not Thatcherism.

So why could she not keep him aboard? Why, even after he went native at the Foreign Office, could she not handle so intellectually sympathetic a colleague? The answer, like so much in politics, lies deep in the personalities of individuals. At the Foreign Office, Mrs Thatcher found Sir Geoffrey not only a focus of disagreement over Europe but, like Francis Pym before him, a weak defender of his position. He irritated her to the point where she simply could not have him across the table, and banished him, with considerable ineptitude, to the leadership of the House. He sadly confirmed her prejudices by an undignified, and for him an uncharacteristic, squabble over titles and accommodation.

For a time it appeared that Sir Geoffrey and his old friend, Douglas Hurd, might form a

fifth column within the cabinet, a cabal of Tory moderates on the wider shores of Thatcherism, perhaps even with Nigel Lawson as a closet ally. Mrs Thatcher's effective dismissal of Mr Lawson during the Alan Walters affair put paid to such hopes. Now Sir Geoffrey too has gone, pleading his unhappiness with her performance on EC union in Rome. Mrs Thatcher has never been good at man-management. Now her inability to pat a back and squeeze an arm when such coaxing might save her much trouble has landed her with yet another cabinet crisis.

She will survive it. If Sir Geoffrey believes he can precipitate a leadership election this month with the reopening of parliament he must surely be mistaken. The Conservative party may be in electoral difficulty, but it is unlikely to tear itself apart just now. The Rome summit was an aberration, a cynical charade. Another summit next month is in the offing, and is likely to yield a less belligerent outcome.

Undoubtedly the Europe issue is dividing the party. But it is not another tariff reform, nor another appeasement. The debate is over degrees of sovereignty, subsidiarity, even just the mood music of European co-operation. Undoubtedly Sir Geoffrey has found Mrs Thatcher's tone of voice intolerable. He has become a flag-waver for the pro-unionists. He feels he has a cause to which he wishes to attach his name.

But he is not going to be the next leader of the Conservative party. Nor is it likely that a stalking horse for the most plausible "European" candidate, Michael Heseltine, will run in the next few days. If that stalking horse is Sir Geoffrey himself it will surely end in tears.

The Conservatives tacitly accepted, six months ago, that they would fight the next election under Mrs Thatcher's leadership. As she showed in the House of Commons this week, that leadership remains robust, undaunted and unchallenged. The next generation of Tory leaders are certainly in waiting, but they are waiting within the cabinet, not outside it. Sir Geoffrey's going is sad. He has been a figure of competent reassurance, liberal, sensitive, balanced, the best sort of British politician. But he has departed. And she is still there.

MORALS OF DIVORCE

Any proposal to improve the legal pathway through divorce is likely to be accused of encouraging a moral and social evil. The Law Commission's suggested reforms to the divorce law, published yesterday, will not escape that charge. But the analysis is false. Divorce is the way out of a breakdown in a marriage. It offers a legal means of relief from personal stress and unhappiness whose origins lie beyond the reach of law. The provision of that relief as painlessly as possible is a public benefit, not something to be deplored as undermining morality.

What is required of a good divorce law, as the Law Commission has realised, is that it should offer fair and peaceful arbitration between the parties, including any children, where interests conflict. An attempt to use the law to bolster an idealised pattern of lifelong marriage would be both unproductive and a source of further misery. The existing divorce law, with its hollow requirement that the breakdown of marriage should first have to be "proved" to the technical satisfaction of a court, is a relic of a former assumption in divorce law that it is a proper and feasible function of the law to keep a marriage alive.

The commission's most important proposal is that there should be a standard 12-month delay for "consideration and reflection". In other words, divorce would require a year's notice. This interval would greatly increase the scope for conciliation, not only to see if the marriage were healable but also to provide a friendly rather than an adversarial context for settling property, maintenance, custody and access disputes. Experience has shown that such "divorce guidance counselling" greatly improves the chances of a successful outcome, not least for any children. Many a divorce turns sour only when lawyers start treating it as a battlefield.

If the courts can accept that one party has

behaved "unreasonably" simply on the assertion of the other, as now happens with so-called "quickie" divorce, it is no great extra step to accept the assertion of one party or the other that the marriage has ended, subject only to the passage of time for due reflection. In this respect the Law Commission's reforms amount to "divorce on demand", but that is the way the law has been tacitly operated for years in the great majority of cases. This corresponds to the reality of marriage in modern secular society: where a relationship of personal affection no longer exists the law should not pretend it does. There is nothing to stop those with a different view of marriage applying it to themselves.

The Law Commission's proposals should be acceptable to government and parliament because they satisfy the only test that should apply in this area, namely that the law should be abreast of human behaviour, describing rather than prescribing. There is little a concerned government can do to fortify marriages so that they break down less often, though the plea of the marriage counselling service Relate for more public funds to support conciliation points to one direction where a stitch in time can save more than nine. A marriage saved by counselling is far cheaper for the state than looking after the fragmented parts of a family after breakdown.

Divorce was once heavily stigmatised, and all but closed to any but the very rich. The stigma has largely departed, but its memory still affects public debate in the unthinkingly punitive assumption that divorce ought to be painful to the parties. Divorce should never be casual — any more than marriage — and should avoid excessive hurt to those involved. The Law Commission's proposals acknowledge this. They indicate the rational and realistic direction in which the law should move.

FOR WHOM THE ROAD TOLLS?

In the late 17th century, when road pricing was first introduced to Britain, a barrier of spears or pikes set up across a road gave its name to the turnpike. Horsemen were not allowed to pass without paying a toll. The system lasted less than 200 years, and so enraged those who could not afford to pay that there was eventually an uprising against tolls in the Rebecca riots of 1843 in South Wales. More recently, Oslo commuters have fire-bombed the new toll-booths erected to charge drivers for access to the city centre. Undaunted, the government will next week announce a bill to allow private companies to build toll roads and bridges alongside the existing British road network. This too will be misconceived.

When the Conservatives came to power, there were 18½ million vehicles on the road. Now there are more than 24 million. Road traffic is forecast to rise by between 83 and 142 per cent by 2025, presumably if price and congestion are not used to stop it. Environmentalists say that building new roads will simply increase still further the volume of traffic. None the less, the government is determined to stimulate demand by its £17 billion road-building programme. The new bill will enable some of these roads to be built and operated by the private sector.

The purpose is to transfer the risk of cost overruns from the taxpayer to the private company. In return for building the road, the company will be allowed to levy tolls to the road users. Already ten such schemes are planned, including a second Severn crossing, a relief road to the north of Birmingham and a motorway link between the M25 and Chelmsford.

What kind of risk does the government

envisage? The pressure on the government to rescue an abandoned road project would be irresistible. The government believes that private companies will bring more efficient management techniques to the road business than bureaucrats. Yet a tollbooth is a tollbooth. If the transport department merely wants to concentrate the private companies' minds on costs, it could put its own roadbuilding projects out to tender and enforce an absolute cash limit on the winner.

The most persuasive argument against private roads is that they are not really private at all, except in the cost of their finance. The government can borrow long-term for 11½ per cent; Taylor Woodrow would be lucky to get away with 13 per cent and similar projects tend to require a 20 per cent yield. Bankers will rightly be sceptical about recouping their capital and will expect correspondingly higher prices. Tolls work in sparsely populated countries such as America, where motorway exits are about 20 miles apart, and where there are few alternative free routes on offer. Even in France, many private road operators have gone bankrupt and have had to be nationalised. In densely-populated Britain, which already has a closely-woven cobweb of roads, the private operators will face both competition from free roads, and the expense of setting up toll stations every few miles.

Roads require the most meticulous preparation, involving issues of compulsory purchase and public enquiry way beyond the resources of most private organisations. If the government really wants toll roads in Britain, as a form of marginal pricing of long-distance travel, then it should pay for them itself and keep the profit.

Identity of the 'Fifth Man'

From Lord Armstrong of Ilminster

Sir, Mr Chapman Pincher (October 29) is of course right to say that details of John Cairncross's recruitment as a Soviet agent and of his activities in that role have been familiar for many years — even without the help of Mr Pincher's books and Mr Peter Wright — to any one who is knowledgeable in this field.

What will be new to many is the fact, now confirmed by Mr Gordievsky, that Cairncross was regarded by the KGB as one of "the magnificent five".

Since "the five" were always a KGB category, Mr Gordievsky's testimony on this point carries great weight. Four were identified beyond a peradventure — Burgess, Maclean, Philby and Blunt, but as seen from here Cairncross has hitherto been only one of several possible candidates for the final name to make up the total number.

The effect of Mr Gordievsky's testimony is that Cairncross must now be regarded as by far the most likely candidate for the last of the five to be clearly identified — though not for that reason necessarily the least valuable to his masters.

Mr Pincher also fairly suggests that "Cairncross has no relevance in the Hollis case". What he does not point out is that what Mr Gordievsky's testimony has done is virtually to destroy the case for thinking that Sir Roger Hollis might have been a Soviet agent — a case that Mr Pincher deployed in the two books to which he refers but which was always stronger in the ingenious imagination of Mr Peter Wright than in reality.

It is too late to make amends to Sir Roger Hollis himself, but in justice to the good name of a loyal public servant and for the sake of his family I hope that we have now heard the last of this damaging but, as I believe, unsustainable allegation.

Yours faithfully,
ROBERT ARMSTRONG,
House of Lords,
October 30.

M3 extension

From Mr J. R. Lucas, FBA

Sir, Mr Justice McCullough's judgment against the Winchester protesters (report, October 27) was in part based on a narrow point of law, that the 1988 EC directive did not apply to Ministry proposals because they were "already in the pipeline".

Whatever the merits of that as a legal argument, it surely would give the lie to the government's professed concern for the environment if it presses ahead with the scheme without making an environmental impact assessment.

The road would go through an area of outstanding natural beauty and special scientific interest: it is exactly the sort of case where such an assessment ought to be made. The minister's decision whether in fact to have one will be a clear indication of whether he is the minister for the environment or the minister against it.

Yours etc.,
J. R. LUCAS,
Merton College,
Oxford,
October 27.

Burial at sea

From the Reverend R. J. Lowe, RN (ret)

Sir, Regarding your report, "Sea burial bodies float back" (October 29): until the first of World War Two HM Ships carried a supply of iron cannon balls. When a casualty was seen into his hammock for burial at sea two or three of these cannon balls were sewn in with him to ensure that he remained afloat in the deep.

Yours faithfully,
R. J. LOWE,
75 Conifer Crest,
Wash Common,
Newbury, Berkshire,
October 29.

In defence of bards

From Mrs J. Graham-Jones

Sir, Under Word Watching today (October 25) the definition of Gorsedd, more correctly, the Gorsedd of Bards of the Isle of Britain (i.e. Great Britain) reads: "a meeting of daft, anachronistic bards and druids in Wales..."

The 1,500 Welsh bards, highly skilled in the literary arts of their language, come from all walks of life: all the professions including bishops, judges and professors, farmworkers and landowners, business people and tradesmen. Their flowing robes are symbolic of equality in their own language. "Daft" they are not.

Yours faithfully,
JUDITH GRAHAM-JONES,
Hendre, 9 St Anthony's Way,
Haverfordwest, Dyfed.

Control of 'pest' birds

From Mr Anthony Boasey

Sir, The European Commission has persuaded the British government to consider changing the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 in order to conform with the EC 1979 Birds Directive. Under this proposal the 13 species of birds at present listed in Part II of Schedule 2 of the Act, namely crow, collared dove, great black-backed gull, lesser black-backed gull, herring gull, jackdaw, jay, magpie, feral pigeon, rook, house sparrow, starling and woodpigeon would be transferred to Part I of the Schedule.

UK role in future of Community

From Mr William Cash, MP for Stafford (Conservative)

Sir, Michael Binyon's analysis ("British vision of EC future under scrutiny in Rome talks", October 27) of the European Commission's report on its proposed amendment to the European treaties (A Single Community) is far removed from the actual document now in the House of Commons library. I hope the full report will be read as widely as possible. It bears out the deep concern I expressed in my recent Bow Group pamphlet as chairman of the Conservative backbench committee on European affairs.

1. There could never be "any sole Commission right to make foreign policy". The Commission calls for a "common foreign policy" also covering "security matters, given that defence is an essential element of security".

2. The Commission does not say "defence should best stay with the WEU". It does say: "The new Treaty should, in general terms, point the way towards a common security policy, including defence" — with majority voting and back to the ill-fated League of Nations.

3. Far from "slapping down" the European Parliament, demands, the Commission says "the powers of the European Parliament must be strengthened", including "joint responsibility for Community revenue". The European Parliament, it claims, is "first and foremost" the forum for European democracy.

Binyon omits reference to the Commission's calls for a taxation policy geared to the internal market and for a common energy policy.

The Commission's report, which is neither "comprehensive", "coherent", "cautious" nor "visionary", is a blueprint for a federal Europe. It shows they are trying to bounce us out of co-operation (which is what we signed up to) into a loss of control and of consent.

Yours faithfully,
BILL CASH,
House of Commons,
October 29.

Gulf build-up

From the Reverend Dr Kenneth G. Greet

Sir, I have returned from several weeks in the USA, thanking God for the growing resistance, especially in the churches, to the military build-up in the Gulf. That resistance arises from the recognition that war initiated by the United States is an awful possibility.

The publicly expressed view that such a war would "restore American glory" is abhorrent, and the notion that it would be a great moral crusade is a naive delusion. Any attempt by Christians to bring such an initiative within the traditional definition of just war is an exercise in self-deception. It would only compound the evil done by Saddam Hussein, evil rendered potent by the fact that the West has armed him to the teeth.

Cycling in Cambridge

From Mr J. V. Tyson

Sir, The plans of Cambridge City Council to ban bicycles from parts of the city during the day (report, October 18) constitute a most unwelcome blow to our national heritage, for widely ridden crooked bicycles in profusion are as much a part of the genuine essence of Cambridge as the punts or the May Balls or the bookshops or the top-hatted chorists of King's College.

Cyclists wishing to pass through the banned triangle of streets will now have to walk with their machines, thereby occupying a bigger horizontal space for a longer time and adding to the hazards of the crowded and narrow streets.

It would surely be less injurious to the fundamental life of the city to exclude motor traffic from the streets in question. Cambridge is, above all for scholarship, and that cannot flourish if the efficient transportation of undergraduates is impeded.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN TYSON (Headmaster),
St Edmund's School,
Canterbury, Kent.

The true test?

From Mr Stewart Reuben

Sir, I read the letter from the headmaster of The Perse School, Cambridge (October 21) with some concern. It demonstrates the danger of listening to people connected with education about solving the problems in our schools.

Clearly what is required is continuous assessment of all pupils from the age of four to 18. This would release teachers to pursue what our government correctly sees as their true purpose, the setting and marking of examination papers. There would then be no problem deciding how much progress each pupil had made.

Traditionalists would be delighted that all pupils would be pursuing a purely practical course, leading to great experience in the most important facet of modern life — form-filling.

Yours faithfully,
STEWART REUBEN,
11 Haversham Close,
Twickenham,
Middlesex,
October 22.

Letters to the Editor should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be sent to a fax number — (071) 782 5046.

Child benefit and multiple births

From Dr Elizabeth Bryan

Sir, Where the "first born" is not a single child but twins or triplets should not the mother receive the premium for all the children (report, October 25)?

A first-time mother, faced with caring for two or more babies rather than one, will be under far greater strains, emotional, physical or financial. She cannot benefit from the "hand-down" system since she must have two or three sets of everything from the start.

Moreover, the single child much more rarely requires the hiring of outside help.

Yours faithfully,
ELIZABETH BRYAN
(Medical director),
Multiple Births Foundation,
Queen Charlotte's and Chelsea Hospital,
Goldhawk Road, W6,
October 25.

Family maintenance

From Mrs Bruce Lidington

Sir, In its white paper on child maintenance (report, October 30) the government provided for the first time a uniform, nationally recognised formula for calculating the amount. This suggests that, after deducting reasonable living expenses the estranged parent should be required to provide up to half the disposable income toward his or her children.

Although this appears, subject to the definition of "reasonable", to be a positive advance, it raises a question. Since *de facto* "divorce upon demand" was introduced in the early 1970s many fathers have found that, as a direct consequence of a divorce they neither wanted nor believed to be in their children's best interests, they have been stripped of assets, rendered homeless and have been obliged to pay maintenance far in excess of half their total income. In some cases this has left them with less than £40 per week (by 1990 equivalents) to live on.

The white paper indicates that for many years these fathers have been overpaying to a serious degree. Yours faithfully,
BRUCE LIDINGTON
(National council member,
Families Need Fathers),
159 Butler Road,
Harrow, Middlesex,
October 30.

Enterprise at 80

From Mr G. F. Harrison

Sir, Although in an entirely different field from the remarkable achievement of Mr Don Macleod (October 19) may I report another Grandma Moses exploit? At 60 years of age, with the enthusiastic encouragement of a close friend, I started rock-climbing and after the first time out was well and truly hooked. I still climb in the Lake District, Snowdonia, Scotland and the Dolomites. Nothing very difficult. "Hard very severe" at best. I shall be 80 in November.

Yours sincerely,
GORDON HARRISON,
New Place, High Street,
Whitchurch-on-Thames,
Reading, Berkshire.

From Mr William Howard

Sir, I was born in 1907 and spent all my working years in a bank. In my seventies I wrote an A-Z joke book to amuse my grandchildren, and to tempt them into reading. It was subsequently published and to date some 100,000 copies have been sold.

Four more books have followed and the last two, published in 1988, I wrote when I was on the threshold of 80. One of my last books, *Writing Jokes and Riddles*, was an attempt to expand children's vocabulary, and is in the National Curriculum Council's library.

Yours faithfully,
BILL HOWARD,
1 College Gardens,
New Malden, Surrey.

From Mrs Muriel May

Sir, I am 86 years old and am endeavouring to master the complexities of a word processor, on which I have typed this letter.

Yours faithfully,
MURIEL MAY,
2 Burton Close,
North Walsham, Norfolk.

An ill wind

From Mr David Froome

Sir, May I enter a plea of mitigation on behalf of the Meteorological Office? As a result of their warnings last week my garden is tidy, free from garden furniture, flower pots and other summer impedimenta. My neighbours, also, have taken advantage of this morning's extra hour to carry out tasks normally delayed until New Year's Day.

Storms or no storms, the Meteorological Office have rendered the public a service.

I remain, yours faithfully,
DAVID FROOME,
15 Howard's Thicket,
Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire,
October 28.

Where good Muslims are true Brits

**Five years after
living in
Bradford,
Dervla Murphy
returns to find a
pre-election
community
rooted in
tolerance**

The insam — in his late thirties, stocky and dignified — had a firm handshake, a soft voice, a glossy, black beard and clear, green eyes that looked straight at you all the time. Doubt flickered over his face as I removed my shoes in the narrow hallway, with lamentable lack of foresight, I had travelled to Bradford wearing holey socks which clearly contradicted his image of a representative of *The Times*. However, that momentary doubt did not prevent our soon establishing a genuine rapport, relaxing on floor cushions in the parlour with a tea-tray to use if it might be odd that a "liberal" western writer should find herself at ease with Liaquat Hussain, one of the architects of the "anti-Rushdie" campaign in Britain. Obviously, our two-hour conversation could not have occurred if this shorthand phrase were accurate; the encounter was curiously moving — and reassuring. I knew myself to be in the presence of a good man, though the cultural chasm between us could never be bridged. From my side, despite the width of that chasm, I recognised integrity.

Twenty-seven years ago, as a young woman, I travelled alone through Turkey, Persia, Afghanistan and Pakistan. During that five-month journey I benefited daily from two of Islam's most admirable qualities: its elaborate code of hospitality, incorporating a scrupulous sense of honour, and its tolerance and flexibility *when it is not being threatened or abused*. As a western woman doing her own thing – which, if done by any Muslim woman, would have seemed outrageously reprehensible – I was everywhere courted and accepted. This tradition of tolerance contained by Muslim societies unstinted by what we call "fundamentalism", a form of fanaticism whose roots are more often political than religious. It helps to explain the hurt and disillusionment with which British Muslims react to British

A black and white photograph of a residential street in Glasgow. The street is lined with terraced houses and parked cars. In the foreground, a group of young people are standing on the pavement, looking towards the camera. A car is parked on the left side of the street.

intolerance — and then, justifiably feeling threatened, allow their own tolerance to dwindle.

The imam was optimistic when we turned from recent troubles (still present, alas, for poor Salman Rushdie) to the future of Bradford's Muslims. "We are industrious, confident, intelligent. We don't think we are superior to others, but we do have self-esteem. Our people will change some of their minor customs, as they are doing also in Pakistan, but most will remain good Muslims," The Rushdie conflict, he suggested, had made young Muslims more

aware of their duty to preserve and defend their cultural identity. And, in response to relentless discrimination, they are becoming more independent-minded and stoical, no longer hoping for equal treatment, wasting less energy on resenting prejudice. Graduates who could not find jobs to match their degrees are going into commerce. He estimated that West Yorkshire can boast 100 Pakistani millionaires, all of whom started from the poverty line.

The great majority of Bradford's Asians are Mirpuris, who for many years clung to "the myth of

return". Now, consciously or unconsciously, they are busy defining and establishing themselves as British Muslims. And this sense of *belonging* in Britain — the imam explained — contributed to the vehemence of their generation's contribution to the "anti-Rushdie" campaign. A group of temporary migrant workers, firmly rooted elsewhere, might have been able to shrug off British indifference to their being wounded by the blasphemy they perceived (or were told existed) in "that book". A group that now feels British, and has proved itself

hard-working and law-abiding, not unreasonably expects to be listened to when it appeals for the sort of consideration that is accorded to its white Christian fellow citizens.

Akbar and Hussain are "average" representatives of the Bradford-born, educated English-speaking generation; their fathers arrived in the Manningham area in 1962. They had been children when last I met them; now they are strapping moustached young men who recalled their memories of the "anti-Rushdie" demonstrations and what an emotional relief it was to see "that book" being burnt. (Most 16-year-olds enjoy such dramas, whatever their genesis.) At first, the natural British reaction to that event merely exacerbated their hostility. Then, initially as part of an

adolescent rebellion phase, they tried to view the whole tragic controversy from the "liberal" point of view. And although they had not come around to agreeing with it — a psychological impossibility, given their Islamic conditioning — they did now see it, surprisingly clearly.

"Muslims are not as prejudiced as whites," Hussain said. "No one will admit it in public, but some of us kids learnt a lot about Britain from all the fighting over Rushdie. That will be useful for us. It is bad news the whites can't learn too —"

...learn, not ...
...the imam thought
Rusdie's book had
made the young more
aware of their duty to
defend their culture. A
50-year-old plumber
told me: "Bradford's
mosque leaders were
worried for years, seeing
the kids turning
modern. All that fuss
was to get the
whole community
marching behind
them again. But it
won't work. We are all
British now, if the
imams and their
followers can't see that they will
be left behind. What
works is such
relations
and our three heads at
the top to be attacked
by white gangs — may-
be killed ... Bradford
has had enough before — we didn't
need a Rusdie campaign."
The next day, a local, Labour,
elected representative told me
that race relations had not really
been damaged. There was only a
small problem, he said, and when he was approached
he made it clear that the issue of
burning a book was not up for dis-
cussion — that did not happen in
this country. Eventually, he said,
most Muslims accepted this.

practising Christian himself but "many of his friends and bookselling colleagues were and had conveyed to him their strong distaste for the book . . ."

Wandering about Bradford, my observations suggested that the inam was being over-optimistic about the proportion of young people likely to remain "good Muslims". When I met Ambar — aged 22, elegant, poised, thoughtful — in an Asian youth club, I remarked on the startling fact that eight of the 13 notices on the board in the hallway were women-related, which would have been unthinkable five years ago. Ambar smiled and gave the V-sign. Muslim relationships with white girls, she explained, were increasingly being found trouble-some, leading to cross-cultural tension within the relationship and discussion within the home.

"So more and more young men are thinking, 'Why should we have all these hassles with white girls when there are plenty of lasses in our own community?' But before they can have Muslim girlfriends, we must be freed. That means they are no longer so keen to keep us in our place and some of our brothers are beginning to side with us against parents. Also a few older people, like my own mother, are

beside a Pakistani motor mechanic who smiled at my naive interest in the new Islamic party. He summed up the popular reaction of local Muslims: "We would be mad to vote for them — all fanatics with some crazy English convert standing for them in Bradford North. They will not take enough votes to make any difference to anyone. That's our Raving Lunatics Party!"

The indifference to the by-election seemed odd, given a general seething resentment of the poll tax. Perhaps they have had their fill of politics for the moment. In 1988 a superlatively incompetent Labour-controlled metropolitan council, obsessed by "fringe issues", was replaced by an equally incompetent and Tory-controlled council, known as Mrs Thatcher's northern flagship until it sank this year under the weight of its own inequities.

Bradford's poll tax, at £276; is exceptionally low but none the less hated for that. It hits the Asian community of extended families particularly hard; an eight-person household, which previously paid hundreds, must now find thousands.

bands. In Underwood, one of three Bradford North wards with an almost 40 per cent Asian population, a former police activist was used to canvass for Labour while those that Muslims were disappointed with the party, which had given them no more support over Rushdie than the Tories. There could be a big swing away from Labour next week, he said, but it would not be noticed. Many Tories voting Labour against the poll tax.

Since 1985, despite the handicap of extremist councils, Bradford has been Bouncing Back as it resolved to do in 1980. Among my several reasons for falling in love with the city, five years ago, was its refusal to be counted out even when it was unmistakably down.

Recently a big clean-up revealed the long-forgotten fact that Bradford is built of golden sandstone. Now whole areas glow warmly, even under the city's famous lid of Pennine cloud, and on a sunny day the meanest streets look positively festive. Open spaces that I remember strewn with litter and rubble have been replanted with grass, flowers, shrubs, saplings — and the residents marvel at how much this has done to raise morale. Scceptics rightly point out that, thus far, the majority of Pakistanis have not benefited from the Bounce Back. Yet a big minority have, as is evident if one walks around any large Asian area, comparing the shops and restaurants with how they were in 1985.

Fortunately, nobody has yet started an anti-staring campaign, or if someone has it is a failure. I am sentimentally attached to Bradford's olfactory hallmark: the city-centre aroma of staring dung, at its most pungent in the very early morning or late at night.

A black and white photograph of a woman and a young child standing outdoors. The woman is wearing a dark, long coat and a hat, and is holding a cigarette. The child is wearing a dark coat and is standing next to her. They are both looking towards the camera. In the background, there is a row of houses.

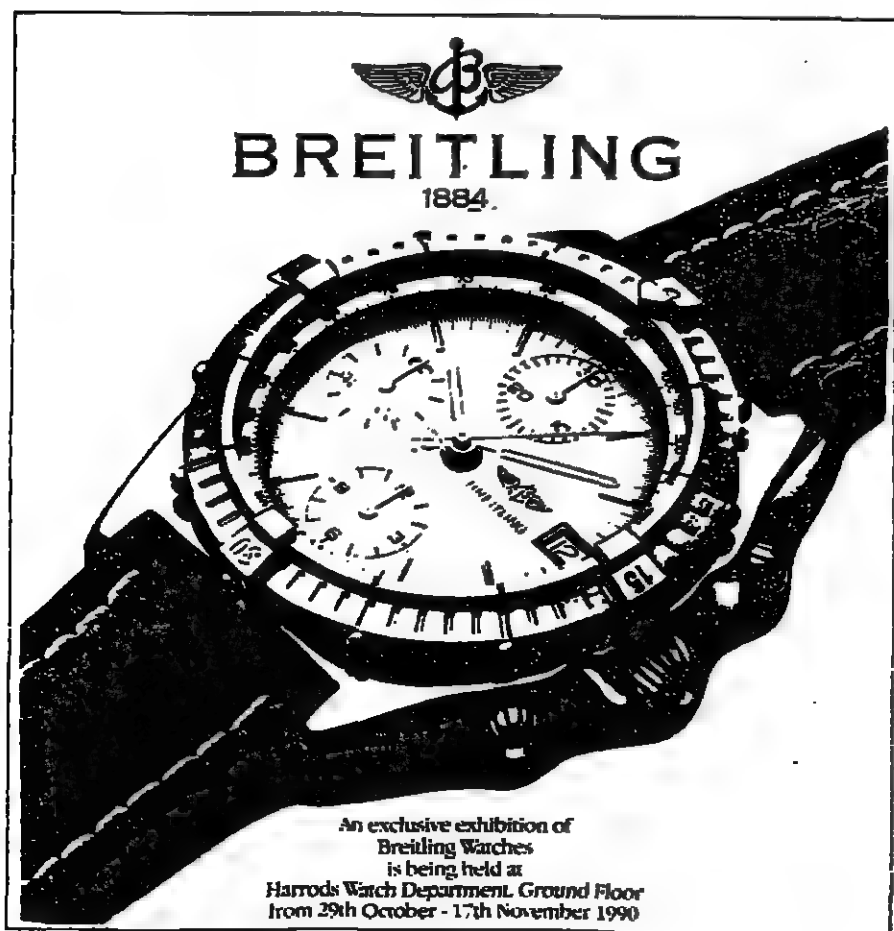
Generating change: but the young preserve their identity

thinking it is safer and better, because of Aids, to have sons going out with Muslim girls. Prejudice is so bad here that only a low type of white girl will go around with an Asian. The Rushdie trouble had two effects. It seemed for a while to be sending the whole community backwards, by strengthening the imams' grip. But by making race relations so much worse, it encouraged our blacks to think more about having a western-type social life with us."

On my way out I passed a plaque commemorating the opening of the club in 1985 that proclaimed: "Here To Stay Here To Fight", betraying the transient influence of the Militant left on some of the club's founder-members.

Most Bradfordians, of all colours, classes and creeds, seemed indifferent to the coming Bradford North by-election - if they were even aware of its imminence, before I mentioned it. On the airport bus into Bradford I sat

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GALLERIE
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The bridge of thorns

Sporting chance.

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ARTS

GALLERIES

Strokes of forgotten genius

Timely reappraisals of William Coldstream and other neglected painters, reviewed by John Russell Taylor

As the leaves fall, half-forgotten painters rise again. Autumn always seems to be the time for efforts of artistic resurrection, and this autumn an unusual variety is on offer. Describing William Coldstream as "half-forgotten" may seem odd, but in his latter years he tended to be honoured in vague and general terms, rather than actually viewed. The Tate Gallery's retrospective tribute, three years after his death, certainly corrects this, though whether to the painter's ultimate advantage it is hard to say.

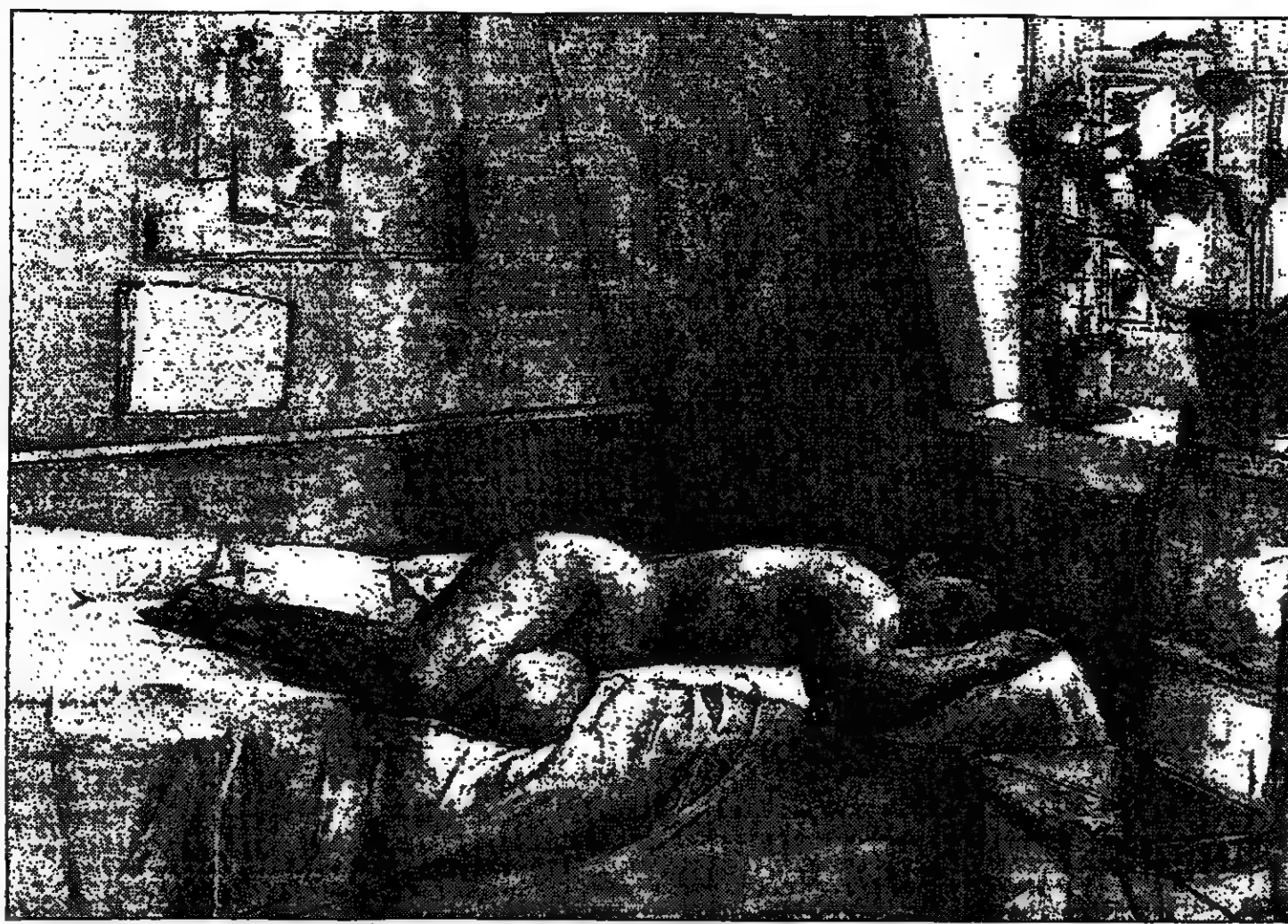
Coldstream was part of that awkward class of artists who are equally famed as teachers and administrators. Enthusiasts tend to complain that their artistic achievements are comparatively neglected. Others wonder if a strong creative urge could be quite so readily sidetracked. Coldstream's case is peculiarly difficult to judge because he was not a prolific painter and he would possibly not have painted much more even if he had the time.

His importance as an influence, first as a leading light of the Euston Road school of urban realists, then as a teacher of distinguished pupils at Camberwell and in a long tenure as Slade professor, is not in dispute. But where does he stand, finally, as an artist in his own right?

The overall effect of the Tate show is oddly dreary. There are undoubtedly moments of wan poetry in the early urban landscapes, and on two memorable occasions the presence of snow to light up the dull suburban scene works wonders. In his war-art period in Italy a certain trick of leaving paintings to look like works in progress first emerges. One or two clearly are unfinished, but mostly this seems to be a refusal to pontificate in paint.

After the war there are walls full of rather bloodless, unimpersonated nudes, and a group of wilfully open-ended portraits of men of mark. It is all immaculately calculated, beautifully executed, and depressing. In person Coldstream had an engagingly dry humour and was ready to speak his mind. In his painting he comes over as grim and self-effacing.

Even Solomon J. Solomon asserts himself with more dash and individuality. The show of his work at the Ben Uri Gallery seems to be the first since 1946 and



Reclining Figure (1960-61): one of several nudes on show in the Tate Gallery's exhibition of paintings by William Coldstream

might not raise high hopes in advance. All that anybody remembers about him these days is that he was a successful society portraitist in the shadow of Sargent, and that when not portraying the great and the good, he produced large and melodramatic Biblical and legendary scenes, such as Liverpool's bloodthirsty "Samson" of 1887. He encouraged a number of younger Jewish artists of his time (1860-1927), and was also important in the evolution of camouflage techniques.

The Ben Uri show, if not gleaming with originality, is a much more spirited affair than the Coldstream. Solomon enjoyed painting pretty women (often his own family) and imposing men: he really does convey a vivid impression of Asquith at the height of his power. The domestic interiors are crowded with social and artistic information, lovingly observed. The watercolours that he did for his own enjoyment are a fresh and pleasing addition to the English watercolour canon. And somehow there is something more lurking there: the savagery of some of the history pictures and the lushness of the mythical nudes hint at a private man even more

interesting than the urbane public figure he chose to present.

Nobody would call Marevna urbane or self-effacing. It seems particularly improbable that she spent her later years in suburban Ealing, and when one or two of the paintings in the retrospective at the Cooling Gallery allude to the location, the results are so dazzlingly transfigured that the place becomes sublimely irrelevant.

Mania Vorobievna Stebelska, to give her full name, was born in Kazan in 1892, proved to be

something of a juvenile prodigy and packed herself off to Italy at the age of 19, where she was dubbed Marevna ("daughter of the sea") by Maxim Gorky. Next stop Paris, where she was in the centre of a group that included Soutine, Modigliani, Zadkine, Lipschitz and, more dramatically for her, Diego Rivera. She lived with him for several years and he fathered her child, but when he returned to Mexico she stayed on and continued her career.

Given this heady company, she remained remarkably unaffiliated in her art. Her style, consistently throughout her long career, is a curious mixture of Cubism and Pointillism: she segments her subjects as a good, not-too-rigorous Cubist should, but then fills in with iridescent patterns of coloured dots. Some of the interest resides undeniably in her records of the way life with the painters of *La Ruche* (the title of one of her autobiographical volumes) looked at the time: her thumbnail sketches are vividly funny. But as a painter with her own style and vision she remains unique and still underestimated.

Albert Heineken was born in Amsterdam and died in Denmark Hill. He lived all his adult life in England, and painted through most of it in extreme obscurity, earning a living primarily by teaching, when his health permitted. Everything began to change in 1961 when, at the age of 58, he was given his first one-man show by the Reid Gallery. His blazing visionary seascapes took the art world by storm: Sir John Rothenstein wrote a book about him; his work sold well and entered many public collections. Then, after his death in 1979,

nothing. A trust controlled all his work that was not in public or private collections, and it became virtually unseeable. Instant fame was followed by instant oblivion.

Now, at last, the Mercury Gallery has put together what in publishing terms would be called a relaunch. The effect is stunning, and his drawings of the clown-figures which haunted him are splendid. But the hitherto unknown seascapes, ablaze with scarlets, oranges and golds, or whipped to a frenzy of poisonous-looking blues and greys, take the breath away. He emerges sublimely updated, and at a time when a selection of Emil Nolde's unforgettable late watercolours is on show at the Whitechapel Art

CRITIC'S CHOICE: GALLERIES

LION LORE: The Lion of St Mark from Venice must be the most famous iguana puzzle in the world. Its date is still not entirely agreed... the British Museum reveals all. British Museum, Great Russell Street, London WC1 (071-636 1565). Mon-Sat, 10am-5pm, Sun, 2.30-5pm, until January 13.

VENICE PRESERVED: Venice has been a constant source of fascination for British and American painters. Visions of Venice contains amazing varieties of response, between Turner and Nevinson, Ruskin and Piper. Bankside Gallery, 48 Hopton Street, London SE1 (071-928 7521) Tues, 10am-6pm, Wed-Sat, 10am-5pm, Sun, 1-5pm, until December 2.

SILVER AGE: The history of Italian silver in the 20th century embraces an infinite variety of styles, mostly represented in this short-lived show. Italian Trade Centre, 46 Piccadilly, London W1 (071-734 6419). Daily, 10am-6pm, until Sunday.

SUB-CONTINENTAL: The centuries in which the British Raj dominated India contained innumerable mutual misunderstandings. The Raj tells the story through numerous portraits, documents, furnishings and such. National Portrait Gallery, St Martin's Place, London WC2 (071-306 0055). Mon-Fri, 10am-5pm, Sat, 10am-6pm, Sun, 2-6pm, until March 17.

JOHN RUSSELL TAYLOR

CLASSICAL MUSIC

Programmed notes

A QUIET revolution may be taking place on the South Bank. Arguments might rage over the wisdom of general director Nicholas Snowman's policies. But there seems a distinct feeling around that late 20th-century music is gaining popularity. Certainly the two concerts given this week by the BBC Symphony Orchestra (Festival Hall) and by the London Sinfonietta (Queen Elizabeth Hall) drew better, and much younger, audiences than expected.

Andrew Davis and the BBC SO have developed an excellent relationship this season, and their programmes have been carefully engineered to suit many tastes. The conservatives here could go home content to have heard Stephen Hough's account, at once tenacious and lyrical, of Bartók's Third Piano Concerto. Those whose sensibilities extended to the polished, dream-like sensuality of Lutoslawski's *Les espaces du sommeil*, written in 1975, could only have revelled in David Wilson-Johnson's exquisite delivery. The orchestra's contribution, beautifully poised from the beginning, complemented his performance perfectly.

The rest was more massive. Roberto Gerhard's Concerto for Orchestra (1965) is a piece which contains too many good ideas. Gerhard tests his listener's powers of absorption in a highly complex texture; indeed, often the structure seems dangerously fragile. Yet Gerhard's wondrous orchestration gives the work its purposefulness. Davis conducted a tenacious performance. And in Messiaen's *Et exspecto resurrectionem mortuorum*, the BBC SO's woodwind, brass and percussion (dominated by tam-tam, gong and bell) achieved the near impossible: the Festival Hall for a while became a cathedral. Even this agnostic felt devout.

The following evening, the London Sinfonietta began its "Explorations" series with an evening which focused attention on the ensemble's conductor for the night, the young composer George Benjamin. Early in the evening came *Panorama*, a

preliminary study for his recently recorded chamber work *Anara* which uses a computer to expand the bewitching sounds of Peruvian panpipes; there was also Jonathan Harvey's *Ritual Melodies*, another piece realised by means of Ircam's computer in Paris.

Anara itself formed the main course. Like Gerhard, Benjamin is possessed of a fertile aural imagination, though, as *Anara* shows, his music is disciplined as well as sensuous and dramatic. Sebastian Bell and Richard Blake wove their flute solos beguilingly around the muted Peruvian sounds. Also heard was the newly complete version of Benjamin's thick-textured but sinewy Yeats setting, *Upon Silence*, for mezzo (Susan Bickley) and consort of viol (Fretwork). The other pieces, both receiving their British premieres, were very much of Benjamin's own orbit. Tristan Murail's recent *Allegories* proved to be sophisticated and refined; while the Quebecois Denis Boulianne's... a certain *chaise cyclodipedia*... for wind quintet (1986) — a "homage to be-bop à la Charlie Parker" which also had much to do with Jorge Luis Borges — teased coquettishly if for rather too long.

When it was first heard, in the 1989 Proms, John Tavener's *The Protecting Veil* held a large audience spellbound. The cello soloist then was Steven Isserlis, who repeated the work recently with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and Nicholas Cleobury. On that earlier occasion Isserlis played with an astounding intensity, his high register confident, his singing tone wondrously concentrated. If here he failed to reproduce the atmosphere of that premiere, he came remarkably close; by any standards he is a phenomenal cellist, though he may not be the only one in this country. Watch out for a young man called Richard May, just 23, who with the pianist Michael Dussek gave a fine *Purcell* Roccoco recital that included Colin Matthews's Five Duos, composed for him in 1985.

STEPHEN PETTIT

Gallery, there can be no higher praise than to say that Houghusen (unconsciously) courts the comparison and emerges from it triumphantly undimmed.

The Paintings of William Coldstream 1908-1987: Tate Gallery, Millbank, SW1 (071-621 1313). Mon-Sat 10-5.30, Sun 2-5.30, until January 6.

Solomon J. Solomon RA Ben Uri Art Gallery, 60 Friar Street, W1 (071-437 2852) Mon-Thurs 10-5, Sun 2-5, until November 18.

Marevna Cooling Gallery, 38 Albemarle Street, W1 (071-629 7128) Mon-Fri 10-6, Sat 10-1, until November 30.

Albert Heineken Mercury Gallery, 26 Cork Street, W1 (071-734 7800). Mon-Fri 10-5.30, Sat 10-12.30, until November 24.

The bridge of thighs

NEWCASTLE'S famous Swing Bridge will do a turn of its own tomorrow as it kicks off Tyneside's first international dance festival. The bridge, which is the focus for the opening event of the Newcastle Dance '90 festival, provides the setting for a free open-air performance by local and international dancers and musicians playing old drums and industrial sirens.

During the performance, the Swing Bridge will turn through 270 degrees over the River Tyne: quite a proreptic, by bridge standards. The week-long festival features events at unusual public sites all over the city, as well as more conventional dance performances at the Newcastle Theatre Royal.

Sporting chance

TRADITIONAL panto now means a show with a twist: vision "name" in a minor role. This Christmas's special gimmick, however, appears to be TV sports persons. At the Bradford Alhambra, Ian Botham is to play the King in *Jack and the Beanstalk*: a "specially written part", which will presumably include references to the 1981 Headingley Test and other famous giant-killing acts.

Barry McGuigan will un-

BRIEFING



Ian Botham: new giant-killing act

doubtedly be a knock-out in the Lewisham Theatre, again playing his Oddjob in *Snow White*, the role he created at Reading last year. And Tessa Sanderson bends mind and sinew to the task of playing Girl Friday (no minor role, this) at Guildford. The only pity is that the panto season comes smack in the middle of the football season: which impresario would not seize the chance of casting Gazza as Prince Charming or, given the use of his famous tear-ducts, even one of the babes in the wood.

Cornish Tate?

WITH at least two generations of distinguished artist inhabitants to its credit, the Cornish seaside town of St Ives is

about the nearest British have come to one of those art colonies which so enlivened Continental art in the early 20th century. Local survivors still keep up the great tradition of Barbara Hepworth and Ben Nicholson, if not at the same level of achievement. Now there is a plan to make a centre for the study of St Ives art in the town itself.

If all goes according to plan, the centre is expected to comprise another limb of the Tate Gallery, a dramatically situated new building (plans already approved), which will regularly show 40 or 50 relevant works from the Tate's main collection. The idea is timely; now, as usual, all that is missing is the money.

Last chance

THE National Theatre's mobile production of Molière's *Tartuffe* altered the setting from Louis XIV's France to the court of his close contemporary on the other side of the world: the Mogul Emperor, Aurangzeb. The cast is all Asian and the religious hypocrite Tartuffe becomes a "faking fakir", a phrase fraught with hazard which the cast manage to get their tongues around without mishap. Jander Verma's energetically physical production, much praised, has been touring for much of the year but it must come to an end at Hackney Empire tomorrow (081-985 2424).

ALBUM REVIEWS: ROCK AND JAZZ

Deconstructivist blues and creative blacks

Led Zeppelin: Led Zeppelin (Atlantic 7567-82144-2)

FOR a long time, the only cool critical stance when it came to Led Zeppelin was that of implacable disdain for its old-school power riffs and macho posturing.

A reappraisal of the band has been gathering momentum since the mid-Eighties when the influence of Zeppelin's awesome musical presence during the preceding decade began to make itself felt in fields as diverse as hip-hop and hardcore. But what has emerged most clearly in the fullness of time is the essential integrity of its music, something which was preserved even after the group's demise. Thanks to astute management and stringent quality control, its legacy has remained just ten great albums (eight of them reached No 1) with no messy complications or cheap-shot repackagings to tarnish the purity of its reputation.

The silence is broken, but the tradition of excellence maintained by the snappily titled *Led Zeppelin*, a handsome four-CD/six-LP boxed set comprising 54 of the best tracks from the group's catalogue. It has been trailed by a condensed (double-CD/triple-LP) version entitled *Re-*

masters, at No 10 in the chart this week.

For much of the early material, the enhanced sound quality is a mixed blessing. Previously unsuspected bass lines suddenly spring to life, for instance on "Tangerine", but there are still holes in some of the original mixes big enough to drive a bus through. What is most striking overall is the breadth of Zeppelin's musical portfolio. The band's sub-metal deconstructions of the blues — such as "Since I've Been Loving You" and the epic "I Can't Quit You Baby" — are among its best numbers. But in others, such as "Bron-Y-Aur Stomp", the group also took its acoustic side seriously, and it was the seamless combination of folk lyricism and heavy rock which provided its most ubiquitous anthem, "Stairway to Heaven". This anthology should finally lay to rest the fallacious idea that Led Zeppelin was simply a more and-trousers heavy metal prototype.

DAVID SINCLAIR

Steve Coleman & Five Elements: Rhythm People (Novus PD63032) Jason Rebello & Clearer View (Novus PD74805)

URBAN chaos, rage and violence: they are simmering in the work of the Brooklyn-based alto saxophonist Steve Coleman. All human life — or at least, the New York variety — is here.

A player who gives his new album the sub-title "The Resurrection of Creative Black Civilisation" is not going to be interested in pretty ballads about young lovers. Whether Coleman's rhetoric amounts to a worthwhile alternative is still open to question. As on his previous JMT recordings, the packaging and the titles — *The Posse*, *Dangerous and Neutral Zone* — tend to be more expressive than the music itself.

The ten slabs of street funk offer little respite. Marvin "Smitty" Smith, probably better known as a pop drummer — is probably the star of the session, aided by Reggie Washington's prowling electric bass. Coleman continues



Steve Coleman: resurrected?

to sound like an icier version of his namesake, Ornette. He is clearly determined to drag jazz out of the conservatory and to take on the challenge from rap artists. If the lyrics on *No Conscience* are anything to go by, it may

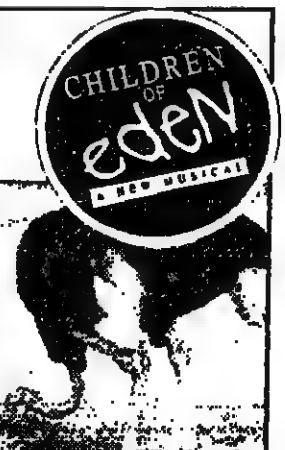
not be a battle worth winning. "As we step into the 21st century of seductive syn-syn-syn technology we forget how to laugh."

Very true. However, perhaps it all sounds more persuasive blaring from a car stereo on a ride over the Brooklyn Bridge.

At 19, the British pianist Jason Rebello is already a seasoned campaigner: McCoy Tyner and mid-Sixties Herbie Hancock seem to have been the dominant influences on him. For his debut as a leader, he has veered towards fusion.

Wayne Shorter is the producer on *A Clearer View*. Bearing in mind his recent track record, that may not be a recommendation, but Rebello's compositions are crisp and unfussy. The outstanding moments occur whenever David O'Higgins steps forward for a tenor solo.

CLIVE DAVIS



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Sir Michael Tippett's THE MASK OF TIME

is performed by the BBC Symphony Orchestra, conductor Andrew Davis, with the BBC Singers and BBC Symphony Chorus, in the Royal Festival Hall, Saturday 3 November, at 7.30pm

Soloists: Faye Robinson, Felicity Palmer, Robert Tear, John Cheek
Pre-concert talk 6.15pm with Sir Michael Tippett
Phone 071-928 8800 for tickets (£3.50-£16.00)
071-927 4714 for further information

"YAM-BA-BA WAH WAH"

In the latest issue of Classic CD magazine, conductor Roger Norrington tries to describe the second movement of Beethoven's 7th Symphony. It's a tricky business putting music into words. Fortunately, you can also listen to the work on this issue's cover CD.

Plus ten other tracks on the full-length CD featuring the best new recordings of Brahms, Schubert, Haydn and much more...



TOM WAITS

A downwardly mobile, latter-day beat-poet whose uniformly excellent recordings shine the spotlight on a host of odd, American kowtow characters, Tom Waits remains the ultimate cult hero. Backed by a nimble jazz quartet on the live *Nighthawks at the Diner* (1976), he established his persona of the boozy, disillusioned dandy, with a perpetual "party in his head", propping up the piano in some smoke-filled dive by the time of *Heartattack and Vine* (1980) he had moved towards the more abrasive, electric R'n'B sounds of John Lee Hooker and Screamin' Jay Hawkins. From there he evolved the psycho-blues band which he has employed to devastating effect on his most distinguished work, *Swordfishtrombones* (1983), *Rain Dogs* (1985) and *Frank's Wild Years* (1987). A dramatically but yet paradoxically loose musical experience, this outstanding trilogy parades a cast of lost souls in often humorous narratives, barked out in Waits's ramshackle style.

WHITESNAKE

With his carefully moussed tangle of curls and preening stage presence, David Coverdale has been the undisputed cock of the Whitesnake roost since he convened the band in 1978. They quickly forged a hard-rocking reputation with *Ready to Rumble* (1980) and *Come and Get It* (1981), but so constantly has the personnel changed around Coverdale that since *Saints and Sinners* (1982), no line-up has had recorded a Whitesnake album that survived intact long enough to tour it. A second generation composite of the original macho-rock vocalists Paul Rodgers and Robert Plant, Coverdale successfully adapted the Seventies blues-rock tradition to the Bon Jovi era with *Whitesnake* 1987, the album which eventually sold 8.5 million copies. By this time, thanks to Coverdale's constant headbunting of "name" musicians, Whitesnake had become a virtual *Who's Who* of heavy rock, a process confirmed recently by the addition of guitarist Steve Vai to the ranks.

NEXT WEEK: The Who, Steve Winwood

Bookend Apollo

[illegible]

TELEVISION & RADIO

COMPILED BY PETER DEAR AND GILLIAN MAKEY
TELEVISION CHOICE PETER WAYMARK/RADIO CHOICE PETER DAVALL

BBC

- 6.00 **Coolfax**
6.30 **BBC Breakfast News** with Laurie Meyer and Jill Dando
8.50 **Daytime UK**
9.00 **News**, regional news and weather
9.05 **Brainwave**, quiz game 9.25 **Dish of the Day**, Cookery hints 9.30 **People Today** features gardening advice
10.00 **News**, regional news and weather
10.05 **Children's BBC** begins with **Playdays** 10.25 **The Family News**, cartoon (r)
10.35 **People Today**, with a report on pets
11.00 **News**, regional news and weather
11.05 **Kirby**, Robert Kirby-Silk hosts a discussion on coping with rape
11.45 **Before Noon** with today's **Brainwave** quiz winner
12.00 **News**, regional news and weather
12.05 **After Noon**, Travel Show Extra
A guide to the Mourne Mountains and Downside 12.30 **Scene Today**
12.55 **Regional news and weather**
1.00 **One O'Clock News** with Martin Lewis, Weather 1.30 **Neighbours**, (Coast)
1.50 **Film: The Grass Is Greener** (1961), Cary Grant is the impoverished aristocrat who opens his home to the public and soon finds his wife (Deborah Kerr) being wooed by one of their first visitors, Robert Mitchum and Jean Simmons co-star but despite the talent involved, this is a ponderous version of a successful West End comedy. Directed by Stanley Donen
3.30 **Lifeline**, Anthony Anderson, an appeal on behalf of the Fortune Centre of Riding Therapy (r) 3.40 **Petunia**, Natural Park, Classic 1938 MGM cartoon

- 3.50 **Bump**, cartoon 3.55 **Comics**, Sophie Aldred and Simon Davies answer young viewers' queries 4.10 **The Jetsons**, cartoon series 4.35 **Record Breakers**, includes the world's fastest skateboarders and a marathon swimmer
5.00 **Newsround** 5.10 **Byker Grove**, Drama serial set around a youth club on Tyneside (Coast)
5.25 **Neighbours** (r), (Coast), Northern Ireland, Sportswide 5.40 **Inside Ulster**
6.00 **Six O'Clock News** with Peter Sissons and Anna Ford, Weather
6.30 **Regional News**, Magazines, Northern Ireland, Neighbours
7.00 **Wogan** with Edward Heath and Elaine Stritch, Plus a song from the group Wilson Phillips
7.30 **Only Fools and Horses**, John Sullivan's marvellous comedy about a pair of shifty south London brothers, starring David Jason, Nicholas Lyndhurst and Lennard Pearce (r), (Coast)
8.00 **Brave New Generation**, Family game show, (Coast)
9.00 **Nine O'Clock News** with Martin Lewis, Regional news and weather
9.30 **Casualty: A Will To Die**, All too true-to-life hospital drama. Both has to deal with a young remand prisoner who has been beaten up. She discovers he has also been raped. (Coast)
10.20 **Crimbus: Garrison Keillor - The Wide Open Place**
A CHOICE: Postponed to make way for a tribute to Leonard Bernstein, Jeremy Harding's profile is mainly devoted to proving that Lake Wogan, Keillor's folksy evocation of small-town Minnesota, really does exist. With carefully selected images from rural Minnesota, Harding has little difficulty making his case, although



Wordmaster: Garrison Keillor (10.20pm)

Keillor's word pictures are so vivid that they hardly need embellishing. The novelist Alison Lurie provides a useful critical commentary, praising Keillor for his Betzacean detail and placing him in the tradition of the cowboy humorist, Will Rogers. Since becoming famous and moving to New York and Lurie wonders whether he can continue to weave whimsical tales when his milieu is no longer Lake Wobegon but a huge, dark, dirty city. Keillor, at least, has no doubts, claiming to find amid the lives of the New Yorkers "a real civility and levelness".
11.20 **Film: Alfie** (1966), The film which won Michael Caine an international stardom as the womanising cockney who shares with the camera his rakish progress and dastardly scheming. Engaging and repellent by turn, Alfie is utterly obliged to rethink when he begins to lose his touch. Good performances, too, from Shelley Winters, Millicent Martin and the late Vivien Merchant. Directed by Lewis Gilbert
1.10am **Weather**

ITV LONDON

- 6.00 **TV-am**
9.25 **Keynotes**, Alastair Davie has the music, the contestants must supply the lyrics 9.55 **Thames News** and weather
10.00 **The Time... The Place...**, Mike Scott chairs a discussion on a topical subject
10.40 **The Morning**, Features and advice on home and family matters, presented by Judy Finnigan and Richard Madeley
12.05 **Rainbow**, Educational entertainment for the young 12.25 **Home and Away**, Australian soap which follows the fortunes of the Fletcher family 12.55 **Thames News** and weather
1.00 **News at One** with John Suchet, Weather
1.20 **Connections**, Television's version of the personal column (r) 1.50 **A Country Practice**, Australian drama series set round a rural community health centre
2.20 **Thames Action** presented by Viv Taylor and Jacqui King includes video reports from consumers in London
2.50 **Talkabout**, Andrew O'Connor hosts the quiz for couples who are able to think and talk quickly 3.15 **News headlines** 3.20 **Thames News headlines** 3.25 **The Young Doctors**, Australian medical drama serial
3.55 **Paddling Pool**, Cartoon fun with the biker from **Darknet** 4.25 **How 2**, Carol Vorderman, Gareth Jones and Fred Dineen with more amazing facts and figures 4.45 **Knightmare**, Dungeoned master Tregard is ready to topple players from reaching their goal in the challenging fantasy game

- 5.10 **Home and Away** (r)
5.40 **News** with Sue Carpenter, Weather
5.55 **The London Programme**, Preview presented by Trevor Phillips
6.00 **O'Clock Live**, Regional magazine for London and the south-east, introduced by Frank Bough and Jeni Barnet
7.00 **Family Fortunes**, The family quiz in which the competing families battle for the £3,000 jackpot. Hosted by Les Dennis
7.30 **Coronation Street**, More dramas from the Rovers Return regulars (Dracle)
8.00 **Murder, She Wrote: Night of the Tarnantula**, Unlaxing tale of murder starring Angela Lansbury as the crime writing sleuth. While Jessica is on a visit to a childhood friend in Jamaica, murder interrupts a family celebration and Jessica becomes involved in voodoo and black magic
9.00 **Coastings**, Episode two of the lively comedy caper about the exploits of two brothers on the run from London hoodlums who take refuge in Blackpool and go into business. Eddie is taken on as the manager of a new bar and disco. Stars Peter Howitt and James Purvis
10.00 **News at Ten** with Sandy Gall and Julia Somerville, Weather 10.35 **LWT News** and weather
10.40 **The London Programme**, presented by Trevor Phillips. Opposition to the community charge is still strong, as is shown by recent demonstrations and the level of non-payment. Tonight's programme focuses on the effect this year's charge will have on next year's levels. Early indicators are that many London boroughs are faced with the prospect of either raising the tax or cutting services

- 11.10 **Jake and the Fatman**, An off-the-wall DA and a smooth, sophisticated PI form an unlikely combusting duo. McCabe and Derek investigate when the wife of a newspaper publisher is murdered and a priest becomes the prime suspect. Starring William Conrad, Joe Penny and tonight, David Soul
12.05am **The World of Golf**, Dickie Davies admits the golf course in the French Alps and David Leadbetter gives one of his weekly coaching sessions
12.35 **We Got It Made: Fatal Distraction**, David's romantic weekend with a beautiful and sophisticated career woman goes horribly wrong
1.05 **The James White Radio Show**, More controversy and live discussion hosted by James White
2.05 **CinemAttractons**, The latest news and behind-the-scenes reports from the American box office
2.35 **European Skateboarding Championships** from Glasgow
3.05 **The Fugitive: The Other Side of the Coin**, David Janssen stars as Richard Kimble, an innocent man avoiding the police who believe him to be a murderer. Tonight a sheriff's son who works in a supermarket, is shot and wounded when he attempts to rob it and in an attempt to cover for him the sheriff tries to harm Kimble (r)
4.00 **The Monkees**, More from the Saties series that made a song and dance about everything. When the Monkees are a success on a television show, the host becomes jealous (r)
4.30 **The Partridge Family**, The family band have to back a girl who has a brother's looks but Van Gogh's ear for music (r)
5.00 **ITN Morning News** with Anne Leathers. Ends at 6.00

BBC 2

- 8.00 **News**, With sign language
8.15 **Westminster**, A look at yesterday's parliamentary proceedings in both Houses
9.00 **Daytime on Two**, emergency first aid 9.10 **For science teachers** of nine to 11-year-olds 9.40 **Standard grade geography** 10.00 **Learning to read** 10.20 **City travel in Scotland** 10.40 **Music**, evoking the sound of the sea 11.00 **Science**, the world of the sea 11.15 **Maths** 11.30 **GCSE German** 11.45 **A grandmother recalls** Hallows' nights of her childhood 12.00 **Today's unusual answer** to its housing problems 12.20 **Classroom body language** 12.50 **How English** became a universal language 1.20 **Postman Pat** 1.40 **Waltz**
2.00 **News** and weather followed by **Words and Pictures** (r)
2.15 **Sport on Friday** introduced by Helen Rollason. Tennis: action from the **Prudential National Championships** in Telford, Rugby: highlights and preview of tomorrow's international at Twickenham between England and Argentina. Includes **News** and weather at 3.00 and 3.50
4.00 **Call My Bluff**, Robert Robinson presides over a contest of words and wit, with Joan Regan, Robert Llewellyn, Arthur Marshall, Frank Muir, Rob Heywood and Jan Francis (r)
4.30 **Fighting Talk**, Judy Kelly, artistic director of the **213 Million** West Yorkshire Playhouse, argues that money is no object when spent on the theatre (then editors' footnotes: But can Britain afford this type of culture?)

- 5.00 **Food and Drink** (r)
5.30 **Top Gear** presented by William Woollard (r)
6.00 **Film: Windom's Way** (1957), Solid and thoughtful drama starring Peter Finch and Mary Ure. A doctor working in a Malayan hospital during the 1950s concentrates more on his marriage than on the patients. But when they begin to rebel against the rubber plantation's conditions, the doctor is forced to negotiate with the army. Written by J.B. George and directed by Ronald Neame. Wales, Business, Matters 6.30 **Espana Viva** 6.55 **A Voice in France** 7.20 **Sea Heat**
7.45 **What the Papers Say**, Mark Lawson of *The Independent* takes a critical look at the week's press
8.00 **Public Eye: The Reading Wars**, Peter Taylor examines recent reports of declining standards in education
8.30 **The Ornamental Kitchen Garden**, In the last programme of an enjoyable series, Geoff Hamilton visits Hatton Fruit Garden in Kent. (Coast)
9.00 **Unspoken Terror: Dorothy McGuire** (11.50pm)
A CHOICE: Ethel Lina White may not be a name to conjure with these days but her books have provided the cinema with two of its most famous thrillers. The first was *Hitchcock's The Lady Vanishes* and the second was *The Spiral Staircase*. Despite their conventions of the 1930s, they are very different subjects and very different films. *The Lady Vanishes* is a light-hearted caper, *The Spiral Staircase* the story of a mute serving girl (Dorothy McGuire) being terrorised by the psychopathic killer of married women. *The Spiral Staircase* draws on the conventions of the old dark house thriller and is atmospherically directed by Robert Siodmak, with a Germanic attention to heavy, brooding shadows and baroque effects. At the same time the film reflects a Forties Hollywood obsession with the psychology of obsession. It is a tightly-organised narrative which runs only just over 80 minutes and has barely a redundant frame. Ends at 1.15am



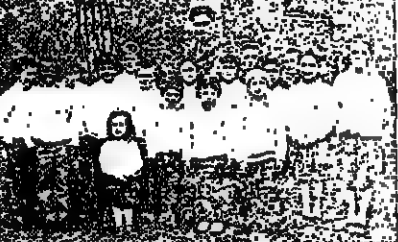
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- 11.50 **Film: The Spiral Staircase** (1946), A CHOICE
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CHANNEL 4

- 6.00 **The Art of Landscape**, Gentle music and the natural world
6.20 **Business Daily**
6.30 **The Channel Four Daily**
9.25 **Sonics**
12.00 **Time To Talk**, Lesley Judd talks to actress Anna Carter about her interest in social issues, her childhood in India and the influence of her Quaker aunt and uncle on her formative years (r)
12.30 **Business Daily**, Financial and business news service
1.00 **Sesame Street**, Educational fun for the very young
2.00 **Sri Guru Nanak Diw Jai**, Documentary which traces the development of Sikhism (r)
2.30 **Film: Hangover Square** (1944, b/w), Atmospheric and stylishly shot. Edwardian psycho-drama with the obsessive Lord Creger (who died soon after the film was completed) as a composer driven to murder under the influence of noise-induced blackouts. Linda Darnell is the involuntary singer who persuades him to prostitute his talents writing popular songs for her. Directed by John Brahm
4.00 **Andy's Requiem**, When organist Andrew Worton-Stewart discovered he was HIV positive while living in the United States he returned to the south coast of England to compose his own requiem. In this programme he talks about the ideas behind his three-year undertaking, completed just before his death in March this year
4.30 **Fifteen to One**, William G. Stewart fires the questions at another 15 contestants

- 5.10 **Home and Away** (r)
5.40 **News** with Sue Carpenter, Weather
5.55 **The London Programme**, Preview presented by Trevor Phillips
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School for scandal: Tony Slattery (10.30pm)

- sets out to expose the proprietor of a school which claims to be turning out child geniuses. One of these, a nine-year-old called Trevor, has written an opera in German and a 400-page sequel to *Piranesi's* *Wells*. As before, the parody is sharp and accurate and the more effective for being gently underplayed. But television taking the me out of television is always a tricky business and I have to say that, even if this was not their intention some of the real Cook shows have been kinder
11.00 **Film: The Hurricane** (1937, b/w), South Sea island love story with Jon Hall and Dorothy Lamour as the Polynesian newliweds whose happiness is threatened by white men who persist in locking him in jail. After repeated attempts to escape, the couple are finally reunited, only to have to deal with a hurricane. Spectacular cinema inspired by the earlier San Francisco, with special effects by the same team, led by James Basevi. With Raymond Massey and Mary Astor. Directed by John Ford
12.55am **The World**, See 6.00 Ends at 1.55

ITV VARIATIONS

- ANGLIA**
As London except 1.20pm-1.50 Yn Can Cook 2.20-2.50 **The Champions** - When Am The Hour? 3.00-3.30 **Video Show** 3.00 **Home And Away** 3.25-7.00 **Anglia 1840** Film Impressions 11.40 **Mid** 12.15-1.00 **Video Show** 1.00-1.30 **Home And Away** 1.30-2.00 **Anglia 1840** Film Impressions 2.00-2.30 **Anglia 1840** Film Impressions 2.30-3.00 **Anglia 1840** Film Impressions 3.00-3.30 **Anglia 1840** Film Impressions 3.30-4.00 **Anglia 1840** Film Impressions 4.00-4.30 **Anglia 1840** Film Impressions 4.30-5.00 **Anglia 1840** Film Impressions 5.00-5.30 **Anglia 1840** Film Impressions 5.30-6.00 **Anglia 1840** Film Impressions 6.00-6.30 **Anglia 1840** Film Impressions 6.30-7.00 **Anglia 1840** Film Impressions 7.00-7.30 **Anglia 1840** Film Impressions 7.30-8.00 **Anglia 1840** Film Impressions 8.00-8.30 **Anglia 1840** Film Impressions 8.30-9.00 **Anglia 1840** Film Impressions 9.00-9.30 **Anglia 1840** Film Impressions 9.30-10.00 **Anglia 1840** Film Impressions 10.00-10.30 **Anglia 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Average poll tax of £435 is predicted by Labour

By DOUGLAS BROOM, LOCAL GOVERNMENT CORRESPONDENT

THE Labour party yesterday predicted that poll tax bills next year would average at least £435 a head, £55 higher than the estimate given on Wednesday by Chris Patten, environment secretary.

David Blunkett, Labour's local government spokesman, said that, even with cuts of £2 billion, Mr Patten's "fairly realistic" estimate of an average community charge of £380 would be exceeded by most councils. He accused Mr Patten of underestimating the real costs facing councils in his projections for next year's poll tax and spending limits.

The value of the 19 per cent increase in spending limits for next year had been eroded by substantial underestimates of the amount councils would spend in the present financial year. Although the government gave councils permission to spend £32.8 billion this financial year, they would actually spend a total of £36.4 billion.

As a result, councils would only be able to increase spending by 7 per cent next year to stay within the targets announced on Wednesday. In reality, inflation and wage settlements would add at least

£3.27 billion to budgets next year and new responsibilities imposed on councils by the government would add a further £1.47 billion. Even if cuts of more than £2 billion were made to bring total spending back into line with government figures, shortfalls in the collection of the poll tax would push bills well above the £380 target, Mr Blunkett said.

Figures published by the Audit Commission just before Mr Patten's announcement on Wednesday showed that, six months after the introduction of the poll tax in England and Wales, one in ten adults had yet to make any payment. The highest level of non-payment was in London, where almost one-quarter of adults had paid nothing.

Mr Blunkett's figures suggest that even a comparatively modest non-payment rate of 7 per cent would add £55 to poll tax bills next year. If the level is 15 per cent, as widely predicted, the average community charge for 1991 would be around £500 a head. "Mr Patten cannot deliver his promises to limit spending to £39 billion or to keep poll tax to £380 on average," he said. "Poll tax payers, local councils and Tory backbench MPs are going to get the worst of both worlds: rising poll tax bills and cuts in key services."

An environment department spokeswoman said that ministers were confident that, once councils began enforcing poll tax bills in earnest, arrears would fall. Only one-quarter of councils had, so far, taken legal action against defaulters.

Councils were being given a generous settlement for next year, and the fact that they had only 7 per cent for next year was the result of a 15 per cent increase in spending this year, she said.

● The Labour-controlled London borough of Haringey was warned that switchboard and postal links would be cut at its offices at 10am today, unless redundancy notices issued to 14 staff were withdrawn.

The National and Local Government Officers' Association said that it would call out the council's switchboard and postroom workers on indefinite strike unless its demands were met. The council's 123 poll tax staff are already on strike over the job losses, caused by cost-cutting as a result of charge-capping.

The union is accusing the council of breaking an agreement to redeploy surplus staff, and has said that it is determined to safeguard its members' jobs. The council says that only one of the 14 staff in question will face compulsory redundancy, and has offered to renew efforts to find them alternative jobs.

Parliament, page 8



Leaning Lighthouse: English Heritage is being asked to provide funds to help erect the 17th century lighthouse at Flamborough Head. Christopher Walker, East Yorkshire's chief architect, has drawn up a plan to coat the 75 ft high lighthouse in a new liquid, plastic glaze which would provide protection against the weather for the stonework and also give the structure added strength.

Britain in hostage row with allies

Continued from page 1

the ink was dry on the documents. One Whitehall source said: "This really is the end."

The government's anger is all the more intense because Britain has more hostages in Iraq than any other nation and was not consulted by the Germans and Italians.

The Foreign Office statement yesterday said "We have been informed that the German and Italian governments yesterday proposed to the UN secretary general that Herr Brandt accompanied by other leading European politicians might pay a visit to Baghdad under UN auspices to plead for the release of all the hostages."

The UN secretary general has his own special representative and has declined to meet this request. It follows that a visit by Herr Brandt or any other European politicians must be discouraged in accordance with the conclusions of the Rome European council.

Mrs Thatcher, who has been criticised for a grudging response to Mr Heath's Baghdad mission, which secured the release of more than 30 British hostages, drew attention to the agreement on such missions in her Rome press conference. The Rome summit had agreed too that visits should

be left to the UN's special envoy.

Speaking on BBC TV's *Six O'Clock News* Edward Heath said: "I deplore the remarks which were reported today from President Bush, saying that 'he had had it' as far as President Hussein was concerned."

These issues were far too great to be decided on a personal like or dislike between national leaders. "It is horrifying that this position should have been reached. What is

required is a cool head and patience."

Mr Heath added: "My attitude is that she (Margaret Thatcher) should dissociate herself from the President's statement yesterday."

"There must be a distinction between appeasement and solving a problem. And what we have got to do in the Middle East is solve the problem. That requires a diplomatic effort. And that effort is not being made. The govern-

ment has abdicated diplomacy."

Mr Heath said that tens of thousands of lives were at stake. He also criticised the Foreign Office for discouraging relatives from visiting hostages in Iraq this Christmas.

Ten British women are to visit Baghdad next week to ask for the release of their husbands, contrary to advice from the Foreign Office which believes they could be taking "considerable risks."

No-fault divorce plan shelved

Continued from page 1

and the ease with which divorce may already be obtained. There is no incentive to think carefully before such a step."

However, the Lord Chancellor has been anxious in recent speeches to emphasise that the proposals, in which divorce is a statutory divorce procedure with its emphasis on fault, insisted, couples are to be encouraged to jointly take responsibility for the divorce and agree arrangements for children, home and finance before a divorce is granted.

Malcolm Wicks, of the Family Policy Studies Centre, welcomed the emphasis in the proposals on the interests of the children. They

could have a huge impact on the lives of the 1.5 million children in England and Wales who are likely to experience their parents' divorce in the Nineties, he said.

Also welcoming the reforms, the Law Society said they would not make divorce easier, "in some cases it would be harder for spouses who under present law have been able to remedy before tying up the ends of their former marriages."

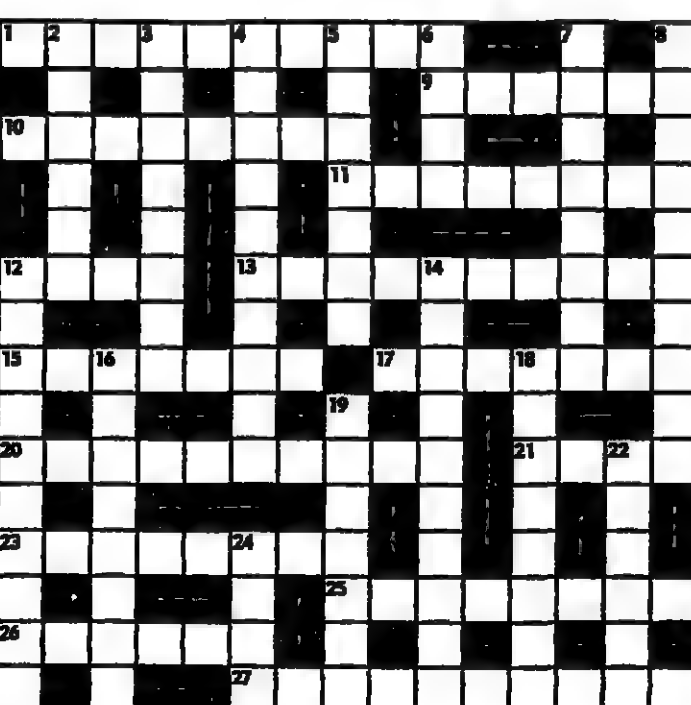
Derek Sande, chairman of the Law Society's family law committee, backed the proposals to remove the need to make accusations of adultery or unreasonable behaviour or to assert the marriage had broken down.

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THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 18,441



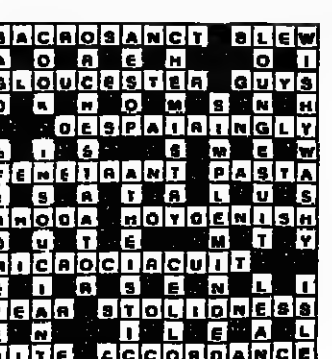
ACROSS

- Used to back worker (6-4).
- I meet a secret policeman in the peninsula (6).
- When enraptured the man agreed (8).
- The account for a decent round trip (8).
- Yard measure (4).
- Drigger makes a point with the administrative officer (10).
- Snip to stop growth (7).
- Strange licensee - a bit innocent (7).
- Fish girl is the cause of food poisoning (10).
- Sad waste (4).
- Two Greek characters abandoning a literary set (8).

DOWN

- Unfortunately can't rout the renegade (8).
- Hobbs or Sutcliffe, possibly, was more frank (6).
- Circus boss to double round the pole (10).
- Oriental king's festival (6).
- It's done to execute project (4).
- Some French to race when this goes off... (10).
- ...but Nat Dean may be slow (7).
- Small coin or obscure note (4).
- Wild boar actually existing among the trees (8).
- Temple destroyed in *Leah*? Can't be (10).
- "...cropped up like hay" (Gilbert) (10).
- Criticize Dutchman over instrument - the pompous ass (10).
- Slipped back to fall into debt (8).
- Adopts a couple in a German town (8).
- Floor where this residence is? (7).
- Dangerous for Peter to support international organisation (6).
- It's right to polish up rough pronunciation (4).

Solution to Puzzle No 18,440



WORD-WATCHING

By Philip Howard
FIGURES OF SPEECH
ANTIMETABOLE
a. A rhetorical device
b. Inverse repetition
c. A series of metaphors
ANACONDA
a. A conical snake
b. Transposition of natural order
c. Distinguishing understatement
PALLIOLLO
a. Emphatic repetition
b. Question and answer sequence
c. An archaic revival
KOTACISM
a. A poetic device
b. Assuming a listener's identity
c. Too many is
Answers on page 22

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M-ways/roads M1-Dartford 733
M-ways/roads Dartford-T. A25 734
M-ways/roads M25-M4 735
M25 London Orbital only 736

National traffic and roadworks
National motorways 737
West Country 738
Wales 739
Midlands 740
East Anglia 741
North-west England 742
North-east England 743
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WEATHER

Southern England and the Midlands will be dry and sunny, but with a few heavy showers. East Anglia, north-west England, Wales, Northern Ireland and southern Scotland will be sunny at times, but most places will have showers. Northern Scotland will have a little sunshine, but it will be windy with showers. Outlook: dry and bright, but with showers, mainly in eastern areas. Fairly cold. Frost at night.

ABROAD

Area	C	F	Area	C	F
Algeria	19	66	Malaysia	29	84
Algeria	19	66	Malaysia	29	84
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Algeria	19	66	Malaysia	29	84
Algeria	19	66	Malaysia	29	84

AROUND BRITAIN

Area	C	F	Area	C	F
London	12	54	London	12	54
London	12	54	London	12	54
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London	12	54	London	12	54
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Weather forecasts are issued twice daily.

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Weather forecasts are issued twice daily.

Jaguar workers threaten to reject pay deal

By KEVIN EASON AND TIM JONES

JAGUAR workers are threatening to reject a 12.5 per cent wage increase in one of the strongest attacks on government policy in the winter pay round.

Leaders of the Transport and General Workers' Union (TGWU) last night warned that government pleas for a "pay plus inflation" agreement could fail. Jaguar executives offered the deal to secure radical changes in working practices which would treble production at Jaguar to 150,000 cars a year.

Average production workers at Jaguar would see their pay increase from £250 a week, including bonuses, to about £275 a week in the first year. They would, however, be expected to abolish a number of working practices, including demarcation between skilled groups. The second stage of the deal would yield a further 7 per cent, or the rate of inflation, from November 1991.

A ballot of the company's 9,500 manual employees, expected by union leaders to almost be a formality, was to have taken place last Monday, but was postponed because of doubts among workers who believe that the company is asking too much for too little.

Last night, Chris Liddell, TGWU secretary, said: "There are elements of the offer which have become open to interpretation. Clearly the workforce and union leaders have to be clear that there is an advantage in the offer before we move forward. That is not at all clear at this stage and there are no guarantees that the workforce will want to accept these proposals."

National union officials are clearly embarrassed by the discontent, as they had strongly recommended the workers to accept the deal. The revolt comes as senior union leaders prepare to fly out to Japan today to tell industrialists there that Britain is ripe for investment.

Bill Morris, deputy secretary-general of the union, who will lead the transport workers' delegation, said that one of the aims would be to "kill some of the myths" that British workers were inflexible.

He said that, since the Ford two-year pay settlement, which next month could result in 33,000 manual workers getting rises of 13 per cent, productivity at the company had increased substantially as workers embraced new working practices. Part of his mission, in a trip arranged by Derbyshire county council, will be to try to achieve recognition for his union at the £700 million Toyota plant being built at Burnaston.

● The Prince of Wales is to attend the enthronement ceremony of Emperor Akihito in Japan later this month, and will promote his ideas for Japanese involvement in his Business Leaders' Forum.

TURNING RIGHT TODAY

LAKE HOUSE

PAVILION

STOCK MARKET

FT 30 Share 1572.1

FT-SE 100 2028.7

New York Dow Jones 2455.10

Tokyo Nikkei 14555.10

Closing Prices

Major indices up

INTEREST RATES

12m 10.50

6m 10.50

3m 10.50

1m 10.50

CURRENCY

US \$ 1.64

German 2.36

Exchange

GOLD

1000 380.00

NORTH SEA OIL

1000 12.00

TOURIST RATES

1000 12.00

BUSINESS

Executive Editor
David Brewerton

BUSINESS AND FINANCE 25-31
LAW 31
MOTORING 33
YOUR OWN BUSINESS 35
SPORT 36-40

Jaguar
workers
threaten
to reject
pay deal

Tunnel rights terms today

By KAVIN EMMETT
AND TIM JONES

EUROTUNNEL will reveal today the terms of its £530 million rights issue, which completes the £2.6 billion of extra funding needed to finish the project. Originally estimated to cost £4.8 billion, the cross-channel link will now require more than £7.5 billion to bring it into operation in 1993.

Fixing the price at which shareholders will be asked to buy more shares continued until late last night. The details will be accompanied by a new package of travel discounts and perks for shareholders.

Leigh rises 93%
Leigh Interests, the environmental services and waste disposal group, reported pre-tax profits up 93 per cent to £6.72 million for the half-year to end-September. The increase was in line with a forecast made in association with Leigh's £37.4 million agreed bid for H T Hughes, a fellow waste disposal operator, in September. Earnings rose 22 per cent to 8.9p a share. The company is recommending an interim dividend of 2.4p a share, 13 per cent up on last year's comparable payment after adjustment for the bonus share element of a £36 million rights issue earlier this year.

DAKS down
DAKS Simpson, the clothing manufacturer and retailer, saw pre-tax profits for the year to end-July fall by 21 per cent to £4.16 million on sales up 9.26 per cent to £69.6 million. Earnings per share fell from 51.4p to 41.4p and the final dividend is 8.25p making 11.75p for the year, up from 10.95p.

Payout held
Wentbury, the housebuilder, reported profits down from £18.2 million to £5.1 million in the six months to end-August. But unit sales were slightly higher at 1,110 homes. Borrowings were contained and gearing was almost unchanged at 50 per cent. The interim dividend is held at 3.25p.

THE POUND

US dollar	1.9525 (+0.0075)
German mark	2.9405 (-0.0081)
Exchange index	94.4 (-0.1)

STOCK MARKET

FT 30 Share	1572.1 (-20.8)
FT-SE 100	2028.0 (-22.3)
New York Dow Jones	2457.18 (+14.85)
Tokyo Nikkei Ave	24295.16 (-898.94)

Closing Prices ... Page 28
Major indices and major changes Page 28

INTEREST RATES

London Bank Base	14%
3-month Interbank	13 1/4-13 1/2%
3-month eligible bills	12 3/4-13 1/4%
US: Prime Rate	10%
Federal Funds	7 1/4-7 1/2%
3-month Treasury Bills	7 08-7 09 1/4%
30-year bonds	100 1/2-100 3/4%

CURRENCIES

London	New York
£ \$1 9525	£ \$1 9525
£ DM 2.9405	£ DM 2.9405
£ Sfr 2.4848	£ Sfr 2.4848
£ FF 9.6611	£ FF 9.6611
£ Yen 254.32	£ Yen 254.32
£ ECU 1.3672	£ ECU 1.3672
ECU £ 0.7343	ECU £ 0.7343
ECU £ 1.3672	ECU £ 1.3672

GOLD

London Fixing	AM \$380 10 PM \$380 40
close \$380 00-380 50 (C195.00)	
New York	Comex \$380 90-381 40*

NORTH SEA OIL

Brent (Duc)	\$34 70/bbl (\$34.41)
* Denotes latest trading price	

TOURIST RATES

Bank	Buy	Sell
Australia	2.57	2.51
Barclays	2.57	2.51
Bank of America	2.57	2.51
Bank of China	2.57	2.51
Bank of India	2.57	2.51
Bank of Japan	2.57	2.51
Bank of Korea	2.57	2.51
Bank of London	2.57	2.51
Bank of Montreal	2.57	2.51
Bank of New York	2.57	2.51
Bank of Paris	2.57	2.51
Bank of Rome	2.57	2.51
Bank of Spain	2.57	2.51
Bank of Sweden	2.57	2.51
Bank of Switzerland	2.57	2.51
Bank of Tokyo	2.57	2.51
Bank of Union	2.57	2.51
Bank of Vietnam	2.57	2.51
Bank of Yugoslavia	2.57	2.51

Slide in pound dashes hopes of early interest rate cut

By GRAHAM SEARJEANT, FINANCIAL EDITOR

HOPES of a further quick cut in interest rates virtually disappeared after sterling slid to its lowest levels against the mark since entry to the exchange-rate mechanism four weeks ago. The weak exchange rate in the face of a strong German currency has emerged as the main limiting factor on the Chancellor's ability to cut interest rates at a time of growing evidence of recession and a further sharp fall in the growth of the money supply.

The Treasury took the unusual step yesterday of issuing a statement to back up Wednesday's moves by the Bank of England to raise the base rate cut after the Confederation of British Industry's gloomy quarterly economic survey. "It is obvious from the authorities' actions in the markets in recent days that they do not consider a fall in interest rates appropriate. As the Chancellor has said, interest rates will not be cut until it is safe to do so," the Treasury said. The statement initially countered overnight weakness in sterling after foreign exchange dealers decided that the Bank's message had applied only to one day. But sterling and share prices again fell sharply after the Bundesbank raised the Lombard rate, its emergency lending rate, by half a point to 8.5 per cent.

The Bundesbank, which operates three separate interest rates, said its action was not intended to raise money market rates in Germany, but only to correct a gap between the emergency lending rate and

market rates. The more important repo rate was fixed at 8 per cent, indicating no upward movement. The move was widely interpreted, however, as an indication that the Bundesbank was moving to tighten monetary conditions, which would lead to higher interest rates, and the mark rose strongly against the dollar.

Sterling, though edging up against the dollar, was dragged down in the ERM and trades were made as low as DM2.9318 in the afternoon. The pound closed in London 0.6 pence lower at DM2.9405, its lowest closing level in the ERM. Share prices fell 1 per cent in London, less than on continental exchanges.

Further evidence of an economic slowdown emerged from the weekly money figures, which showed that growth in M0,

the narrow measure of money supply, slowed from 4.6 per cent to about 3.8 per cent between September and October. Nigel Richardson of Warburg Securities said that the annual rate of growth of M0 over the past six months was now about 1 per cent.

Many in the City believe the Chancellor would like to cut interest rates further on the strength of lower money growth, which was cited as justification for the reduction in base rates to 13 per cent in the money markets, the three-month interest rates crept up to just above 13 1/2 per cent.

Roger Bootle of Midland Montagu said the Chancellor did not need any further evidence from the domestic economy to cut interest rates further, but that he would not want to do so until sterling was above

its ERM central rate of DM 2.95. He said the Bundesbank's move removed fears of a substantive early rise in German interest rates. "UK rates are coming down comparatively soon," he added.

Gerrard Lyons of DKB International said: "There is strong pressure to ease American interest rates further, this is likely to lead to funds moving from dollars into marks, leaving sterling vulnerable."

Interest rate cuts of between 0.5 and 1.5 points are still expected before the end of the year by most commentators.

● The price of Brent crude for December closed 34 cents higher at \$34.75 on the International Petroleum Exchange after touching \$35.18, but trading was slack.

Stock markets, page 28

Polly Peck jobs cut as Nadir wins legal fight

By MATTHEW BOND

ASIL Nadir, chairman of Polly Peck International, has won a significant victory in his battle with the Serious Fraud Office, whose actions he alleges contributed to the collapse of his company. His victory came as the administrators who now run the company made half its headquarters staff redundant.

In the High Court, Lord Justice Taylor and Mr Justice Morland granted Mr Nadir leave to seek a judicial review of the SFO's refusal to tell him what alleged offences it is investigating and what evidence it has of such wrong doing. Mr Nadir was questioned for three hours by the fraud office on September 20, the day Polly Peck's shares were suspended at 108p, after falling 155p.

The legal victory comes two days after the fraud office raided the Mayfair headquarters of Polly Peck, a move that prompted an angry statement from Mr Nadir. In the statement, Mr Nadir said that at the end of the September 20 interview neither he nor his lawyers were any the wiser about the actual transactions or series of transactions that concerned the fraud office.

The administrators changed with running Polly Peck by the High Court made 70 of 140 headquarters staff redundant after full consultation with the executive directors, including Mr Nadir. A spokeswoman for

Coopers & Lybrand Deloitte said that the administrators had made the redundancies with regret, but added that they saw no need for further job losses at headquarters. The administrators are not aware of any redundancies being planned at Polly Peck subsidiaries.

Mr Nadir too regretted the redundancies. "It is a sad day to see 70 dedicated people leave the company, who were part of the team that created the best performing share of 1980-90." But he was encouraged by his courtroom victory. "I think there is some justice in this country."

Mr Nadir said he was expecting to visit northern Cyprus soon: "I will be going again, hopefully before long and trying to be helpful." He believes that the hostility being displayed by the government of northern Cyprus will diminish, as the administrators explain their plan to restructure the company.

In the meantime he says he is offering the administrators as much help as possible.

In Turkey, Richard Stone, a Coopers partner and one of the three administrators, began his investigation of Polly Peck's Turkish businesses, principally Vestel Electronics and Meyna, the food distributor. Mr Stone's visit was overshadowed by the comments of President Turgut Ozal of Turkey. Contradicting Turkey's previous conciliatory line, Mr Ozal told Turkish-Cypriot journalists:

"I can definitely say that nothing will happen to Asil Nadir's investments in Turkey and the Turkish Republic of northern Cyprus."

At the judicial review, Mr Nadir's lawyers will argue that the fraud office has a duty of fairness to provide him with information that will enable Mr Nadir to answer its questions properly. The fraud office rejects that.

Giving leave, Lord Justice Taylor said it was arguable that the law that obliged a person to answer questions put by the fraud office might also impose some other duty on the SFO itself. He added that the court had come to the conclusion "without giving any undue grounds for optimism" that Mr Nadir would win the review.

The judicial review will be an important test of the way the fraud office conducts its activities. Under the 1987 Criminal Justice Act, people assisting police with fraud enquiries do not have the right to remain silent. What Mr Nadir's lawyers are suggesting is that, therefore, neither does the SFO.

Following the court's decision, the fraud office said it recognised the importance of the review. "The SFO welcomes this opportunity to clarify the point at issue."

Lord Justice Taylor and Mr Justice Morland recommended the case be heard as quickly as possible. The fraud office's application for 21 days to prepare its case was granted.



All or nothing: James White, who resigned rather than just be chief executive of Bunzl under a new chairman

White forced to quit at Bunzl

By MARTIN BARROW

INSTITUTIONAL shareholders have forced the resignation of James White as chairman and chief executive of Bunzl after pressurising the board to split.

Mr White and two other directors associated with his ten-year tenure at the company resigned yesterday after four days of talks. He has combined the two senior posts since 1988, and is believed to have declined the chief executive job, refusing to work under a new non-executive chairman. He is not expected to receive compensation.

David Kendall, a non-executive director since 1988, has been appointed non-executive chairman at Bunzl. He is currently deputy chairman of British Coal and is also on the board of STC.

Donald Lattimer, finance director, said: "Jim agreed we should split the roles, but he did not want a new chairman over him. His departure has been amicable and he has agreed to assist the new chairman for six months."

The two other directors who have resigned are Brian Ford, managing director of service and distribution, and Paul Lorenzini who will temporarily remain as president of Bunzl Distribution in America. Terry Simpson, who was also managing director, left three months ago.

Mr White joined Bunzl, which has interests in paper distribution and specialist manufacturing, in 1980 as managing director and is closely associated with the aggressive acquisitive strategy throughout most of the past decade. But two years ago, Bunzl decided to refocus on core businesses and shed operations that it considered did not fit its new strategy.

The change of strategy has had limited success, with the downturn in economy making it difficult for Bunzl to complete disposals at prices which were considered necessary to reduce borrowings incurred during the spending spree.

In 1989, pre-tax profits fell 30 per cent to £65.4 million on sales 6 per cent lower at £1.64 billion and this year prospects are not bright. Last month, Bunzl returned interim profits 25 per cent lower at £30 million and maintained the dividend at 3.6p a share. The shares fell 3p to 57p.

Comment, page 27

Privatisation plans for power 'a fraud'

By PHILIP BASSETT, INDUSTRIAL EDITOR

THE government was effectively accused of fraud by the Labour party over its planned privatisation of the electricity distribution companies to be launched today.

Labour made its attack on the government's electricity privatisation on the eve of today's launch of the Pathfinder prospectus for the distribution companies.

Frank Dobson, Labour's energy spokesman, disclosed for the first time detailed area-by-area projections of the loss on the transaction of each distribution company.

He said that overall the 12 regional electricity companies were to be sold off at less than a third of their real value. Last year, their assets stood at £11.3 billion, and those of the National Grid Company at £4.8 billion.

But these total assets of more than £16.1 billion were expected by the City to be sold for about £5 billion, a loss of more than £11 billion.

Mr Dobson said the large-scale assets had been built up at the expense of electricity consumers, and now "this buxfer government is to knock them down at a fraction of their real value. If anyone else other than the government were doing it, the fraud squad would be called in."

The Pathfinder is expected to contain profit forecasts totalling between £810 million and £820 million before tax for the 12 companies in the current year to end-March, drawn up on the basis that the £2.9 billion of debt injected during the summer was in place throughout the year.

The government's advisers are today likely to make great play of the fact that more than 5 million people have now registered an interest in buying the shares.

DTI seeks German help on LUI probe

By NEIL BENNETT, BANKING CORRESPONDENT

MUNICH Re, Germany's largest reinsurance group, will be asked to help the Department of Trade and Industry enquiry into London United Investments, the collapsed insurance group.

LUI's administrators are suing three former directors and a Liechtenstein trust to recover commissions of up to \$100 million allegedly paid by the group on reinsurance contracts with Munich Re.

The DTI enquiry will focus on the role of Protega Agentur Anstalt, a Liechtenstein trust, into which the directors secretly paid a \$300,000 dividend from an unknown LUI subsidiary in America.

A writ has been issued against Ronnie Driver and Peter Wilson, LUI's former chairman and chief executive, and Henry Weavers, a one-time director. This is to recover commissions allegedly paid when HS Weavers,

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Japanese bank balance upset

From JOE JOSEPH IN TOKYO

WORRIES about Japan's fraying economic health, and its impact on world financial markets, has swelled after three of Japan's biggest banks drastically cut their profits forecasts for the current financial year.

News of the gloomier outlook, which followed a spate of embarrassing scandals involving leading Japanese banks and a dramatic fall in profits of Japan's top stockbrokers, helped to pull the rug from under Japanese stock prices yesterday, sliding nearly 900 points off the Nikkei share index.

Sauwa Bank shrank its profit forecast for the year to March 31, 1991, from 160 billion yen (£628 million) to ¥130 billion. The bank blamed a squeeze on net interest spreads caused by the jump in market and other interest rates and lower earnings from its shareholdings

because of the slump in Tokyo share prices. Fuji Bank cut its forecast profits by one third to ¥100 billion, and Dai-ichi Kangyo, the world's biggest bank, clipped its expectations by 30.3 per cent to ¥115 billion.

The grim forecasts are the latest of many problems for Japan's banking community. Taizo Hashida, chairman of the Japanese Federation of Bankers Associations, has given warning this week that Japanese banks and their customers face the threat of a credit squeeze. Mr Hashida, the chairman of Fuji Bank, also urged bankers in Japan to steer clear of controversy and trouble by not lending money to stock and property market speculators.

Last month, New Japan Securities, a large stockbroker partly owned by the Industrial Bank of Japan, said Japan's dozen biggest commercial banks needed to raise ¥5,000 billion to cure their

capital shortfall after the collapse in Tokyo share values. If they failed, a report by the broker added, they would have to cut their loan books by 16 per cent, more than their entire overseas lending in the past six years.

A week ago Japan's big four securities houses, Nomura, Nikko, Daiwa and Yamaichi, reported average drops in net profits of 60.13 per cent for the six months to September 30. Again, the Tokyo stock market's dramatic fall this year was blamed.

Yesterday's unsettling news from the Japanese banking community, combined with a sharp fall in the yen and heightened anxiety about the possibility of war in the Middle East, sent Tokyo stock prices plunging. The Nikkei closed 898.94 points lower at 24,295.16, the dollar leapt ¥1.35 to end at ¥130.70.

Markets, page 28

GEC in £200m US contract for computers

By ROSS TIEMAN, INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

GENERAL Electric Company of Britain has won a contract, potentially worth more than £200 million, to supply primary flight computers for the Boeing 777. The 777, which was launched this week by Boeing, the world's biggest aircraft-maker, will be its first to adopt fly-by-wire technology, which does away with mechanical linkages between cockpit and control surfaces. GEC has never before won a contract to supply the main flight computers on a fly-by-wire civil airliner.

The Boeing contract is regarded by GEC as an important breakthrough. The computers will be built by GEC Avionics at Rochester, Kent, where 6,000 are employed. The 777, a long-range twin jet, is being launched on the back of orders for up to 68 placed by American Airlines.

American placed orders this week for 34 777s and took options on as many again as part of a record \$22 billion order for Boeing planes. Developing the twin-engine 360-390 seat jet is expected to cost Boeing \$4-5 billion.

GEC said that part of the development work on the flight computer had already been completed. It was not clear how the rest of the development costs would be

split. Fly-by-wire systems are claimed to improve aircraft performance through speedier response while reducing maintenance and operating costs. They were pioneered in military aircraft.

Two high-technology aircraft series made by Boeing's European rival, Airbus Industrie, are already flying.

GEC's experience in fly-by-wire technology was acquired in so-called secondary systems, the remote units which control moving surfaces on the wings and tailplane.

It has also been involved in flight computers for the Tornado fighter-bomber and has a leading role in the European Fighter Aircraft project.

If the Boeing 777 contract is a success, GEC stands to become a leading company in the civil market. As airlines come under growing pressure to invest in more fuel-efficient aircraft, Airbus will be offering A330 and A340 aircraft in competition with Boeing's 777 and models from McDonnell Douglas.

Boeing hopes to win further key orders for the 777 from United Airlines, All Nippon Airways and from British Airways, which is expected to order \$4 billion of planes this year from as-yet unnamed companies.

Clegg comeback on cards



Looking to make a return: former Mountleigh chairman Tony Clegg yesterday

TONY Clegg, the former chairman of Mountleigh, is planning a return to the British property market. The question he cannot answer is when (Matthew Bond writes).

In a week's time it will be a year since Mr Clegg sold his 22.6 per cent stake in Mountleigh to Nelson Peltz and Peter May for £70 million. That anniversary is significant for Mr Clegg. "I felt I should stay out of the domestic market for 12 months at a minimum, but at the right moment I think I would be very interested in coming back into British property," he said.

Mr Clegg was talking after addressing 200 of Essex's more progressive farmers at a seminar organised by Savills,

the quoted property agent. Although he admitted his personal agricultural expertise was limited to a 40-acre farm in Yorkshire "and a few shaggy cattle", Mountleigh was a big investor in agricultural land during his stewardship.

But when he does return to British property he will concentrate, he says, on what he knows best, commercial property. Mr Clegg is already back in his Mayfair stamping ground, working a four-day week for E&F Securities, his private property company, and on charity projects.

He is the first to admit that the golden days of the commercial property market are over and he believes commercial property will take

longer than residential to recover from its present depths. "It is not really a dealer's market at the moment," he says, with characteristic understatement. But there are, he says, still deals to be done. "I have had a lot of things put to me over the last 12 months." As a result his private property company already has investments in America and France.

While next week's anniversary is important for Mr Clegg, it could also be important for Mountleigh shareholders. Mr Peltz and Mr May will then be free to buy more shares in the company. With Mountleigh shares at 56p, compared with the 200p they paid for their initial stake, it will be interesting to see what they do.

North West Water buys three firms

By GRAHAM SEARJEANT
FINANCIAL EDITOR

NORTH West Water Group is paying £51 million for water treatment engineering companies in Britain, America and Ireland to augment its engineering resources and form a base for international expansion.

Dennis Grove, the chairman, said the move was "careful and selective" and stressed that North West was expanding from its existing expertise.

Britain's second biggest privatised water services group is paying \$75 million to buy Envirex, the water treatment division of Banner Industries, the American group, and up to £13.8 million (£12.5 million) for two water engineering companies owned by Jones Group, the Irish conglomerate. All three companies have strong positions in waste water treatment.

Water Engineering, the only one based in Britain, designs, makes and installs waste water plants and numbers North West's core water business among its customers. North West expects technical contributions from the others to strengthen design and engineering capacity for its investment programme.

Envirex made an operating profit for the year to end-June of \$10.6 million on turnover of \$100 million. Water Engineering and Jones Environmental, which operates in Ireland, had combined operating profits of £450,000 and turnover of £13.2 million in 1989.

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

Howden profit fears over supply dispute

HOWDEN Group, the Scottish engineer, has given a warning that its profits for the year to the end of April 1991 will be "very severely affected" by a contractual dispute involving the supply of four tunnelling machines to MT Group. Howden said that the dispute between the two groups, which relates to cost overruns on the contract, will probably be referred to arbitration "which could take up to two years".

The delays and extra costs in completing the contract have resulted in higher than expected borrowings, though Howden forecasts that year-end debt should not be significantly higher than that at the previous year-end.

BDA doubles interim losses

BDA Holdings, the property developer and consultancy, has announced more than doubled interim pre-tax losses of £1.6 million for the six months to end-July compared with £755,000 for the same period last year. The figure reflected losses on sales, and a revaluation of site values and residential property sale prices. The company will not be paying an interim dividend.

Profits ahead 50% at Lofs

DESPITE turbulent markets, London & Overseas Freighters, the British tanker company controlled by the Greek Kalukundis family, reports pre-tax profits up 50 per cent to \$1.11 million for the half year to end-September. The rise resulted from improved trading and reduced interest costs. Earnings per share rose from 5.94 to 8.68 cents. As usual, there is no interim dividend.

Rank sells associate

RANK Organisation's 49 per cent-owned associate Rank Xerox, has sold its businesses in Australia, Malaysia, New Zealand and Singapore to Fuji Xerox, its 50 per cent-owned Japanese associate, for £135 million. The British parent will receive £48.5 million cash because it is entitled to only a third of the joint venture's earnings.

The businesses being sold contributed £4.4 million of post-tax earnings in the last financial year, suggesting an exit multiple on the deal of 11 times earnings, said Michael Gifford, Rank's chief executive.

Brewer falls at half time

BURTONWOOD Brewery, of Cheshire, suffered a fall in pre-tax profits from £2.62 million to £2.38 million in the six months to end-September on turnover 15 per cent higher at £22.98 million. The interim dividend stays at 0.7p a share, payable from earnings up from 8.1p to 8.5p a share as a result of a reduced tax charge. Property profits rose from £650,000 to £860,000.

J Smart rises to £3.76m

Pre-tax profits at J Smart & Co (Contractors), the Edinburgh building and public works contractor to property group, advanced from £3.14 million to £3.76 million in the year to end-July. Earnings per share rose from 20.74p to 24.58p. The final dividend is raised to 5.25p (4.65p), making an improved total of 7.2p (6.4p) for the year. The shares firmed 2p to 158p.

Barclays deputy retires

BARCLAYS Bank has confirmed that Peter Leslie, one of its two deputy chairmen, will retire in March, after 36 years at the bank. He is not being replaced. Mr Leslie, aged 59, became the first chief general manager after Barclays and Barclays International merged in 1985. He held the post for three years.

After Mr Leslie's retirement, Sir Martin Jacobson will be Barclays' sole deputy chairman as part of the divisional reorganisation announced on Wednesday. He will also head the bank's new markets and investment banking division.

Dewhirst to close factory

By PHILIP FANGALOS

DEWHIRST Group, the manufacturer of clothing, is another casualty of the decline of the textile industry and is to close its County Durham factory, at a cost of 83 jobs.

The company said it has been forced to close its plant in Willington because of "difficult trading conditions".

Dewhirst recently said 55 people from the plant would be made redundant in the women's wear production department and talks were in progress with a potential buyer for the rest of the plant.

However, the talks have fallen through and Dewhirst has decided on the closure of the plant.

The group recently announced a sharp decline in first-half profits, down from £2.81 million to £781,000.

However, the company stressed that order books in other areas of its business remain strong and the group's remaining 5,000 employees are not affected by the situation in Willington.

Dewhirst said this was recently emphasised by an £8 million contract with British Airways to supply staff uniforms. The deal involves a three-year contract to supply 30,000 BA staff worldwide with uniforms for flying and ground staff. The shares held steady at 23½p.

Sock Shop assets sale

THE administrators of Sock Shop International, Sophie Mirman's failed business, are likely to stay on until Christmas in order to dispose of peripheral assets and ensure a smooth handover of the business to the management team, headed by Juan Olaso, which has bought the bulk of the company for £3.25 million.

The Sock Shop creditors, who are owed about £17 million, have been told that they are unlikely to recover any of the money.

Sock Shop International will now be called SSI Realisations. The business that has been bought by Mr Olaso, backed by Murray Johnstone, is called Sock Shop Holdings.

The administrators were appointed last February when dealings in the company's shares were suspended on the Unlisted Securities Market.

Kalamazoo back in the black

KALAMAZOO, the office stationery to business systems group, is back in the black after bringing costs under control and disposing of loss-making businesses.

The company made a pre-tax profit of £1.07 million in the year to end-July, compared with a loss of £4.08 million last time. Earnings per share stood at 2.2p (nil), and the company is recommending a dividend of 1p for the year, compared with none last time. The shares rose 2½p to 21½p.

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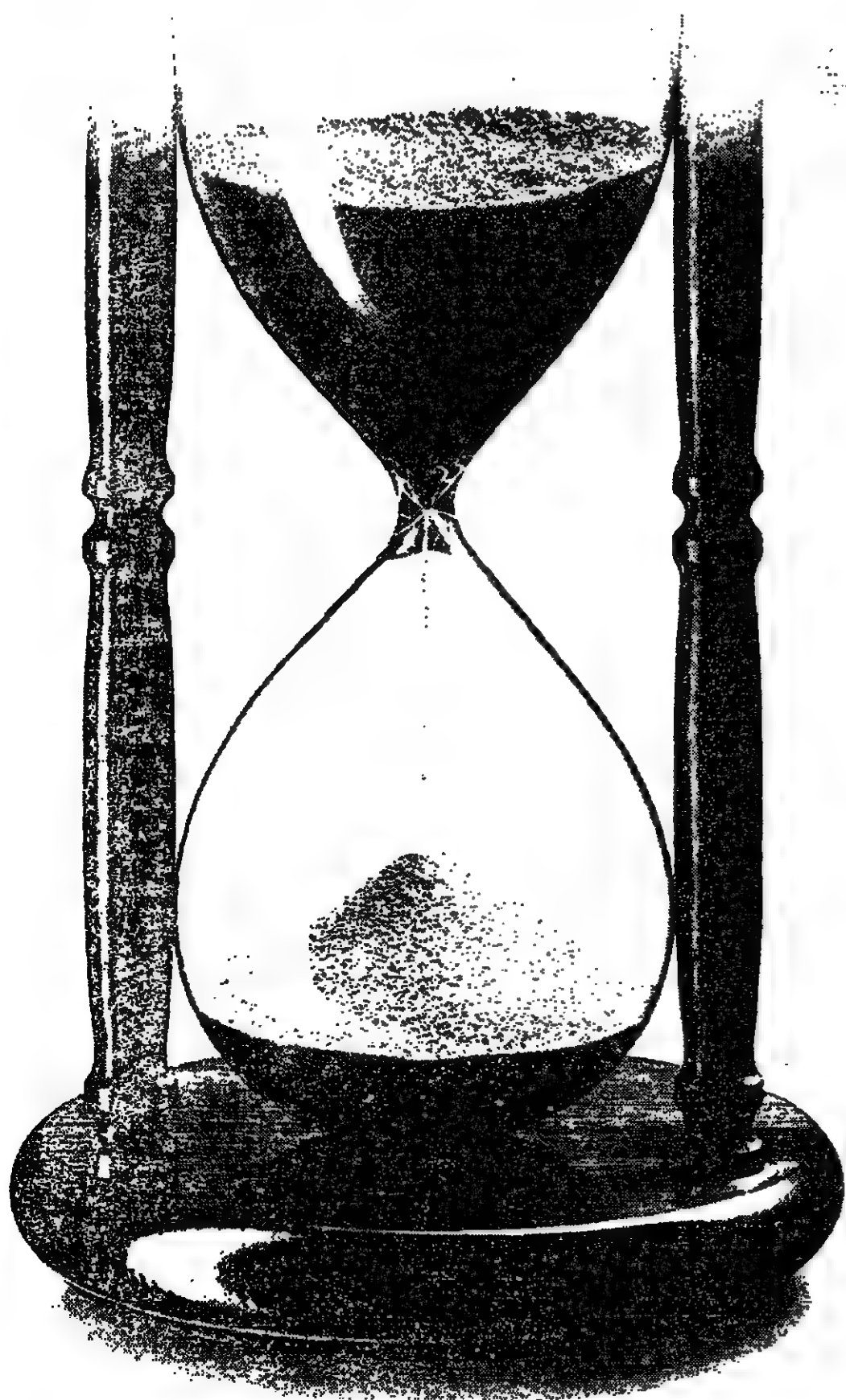
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2nd November, 1990

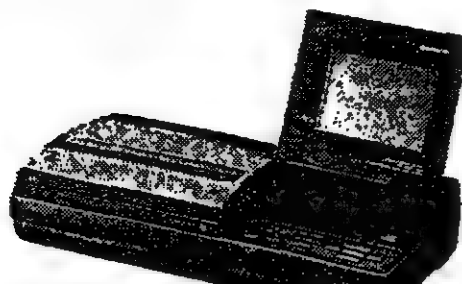
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LUI warnings the DTI missed

COMMENT

DAVID BREWERTON

Anyone who was anyone in the London insurance market knew something was odd about HS Weavers, London United Investment's underwriting agency. It dominated the American liability insurance market, not through any skill, but because it would offer premiums which undercut anything offered by more reputable underwriters. Throughout the years that this went on, the trade and industry department sat by, blinking at the annual returns, but apparently doing little.

We now know that HS Weavers did not possess any special magic which enabled it to undercut everybody in sight. It was simply writing for cashflow, and it appears that some of the cash was flowing to places where it had no business. As the incidence of claims from asbestosis and environmental pollution rose, it was inevitable the cracks in the claims reserves would appear. By the time the cracks were investigated, they were chasms.

But in January 1989, Marsh & McLennan, the American insurer, wrote to clients warning that

claims reserves at Kingscroft and Lime Street, two LUI subsidiaries, were below the DTI's minimum margin. This was a warning that M&M would do business with Weavers only if a client expressly demanded it do so. Otherwise it would choose a safer, but more expensive, underwriter.

M&M gleaned its information from publicly available insurance returns sent by the companies to the DTI. They rang the alarms for M&M, but not, apparently, for the DTI itself.

When the DTI did order an actuarial review of LUI in '89, it concentrated on Walbrook, where reserves were still adequate, not the spivvy operations which were falling apart. Walbrook was asked to stop taking on new business. Finally, this year, the DTI ordered a full actuarial report and almost instantly "discovered" the problem. But it has taken an administration order, and a

sharp-eyed accountant to discover how rotten the whole group was.

Peter Lilley, the fresh face at the DTI, has slammed the stable door, but the time for an investigation was 1989, not 1990. It all adds grist to the mill which is grinding out the message that the DTI is neither staffed nor equipped properly to regulate the insurance business. Mr Lilley's next step must be to examine the alternatives.

Dealt out

The sudden departure of James White from Bunzl highlights the less than satisfactory state of affairs when

the chairman and chief executive of a large public company are one and the same.

In bull markets, such concentration of power rarely causes problems. But in harsher times it means that shareholders can be faced with the impossible task of finding a sympathetic and independent ear when they wish to air legitimate worries over the day-to-day management of a company's affairs.

For Mr White, once a darling of the City for his aggressive dealmaking, it must have been especially painful to realise that his former admirers were baying for change.

There is no doubt however that there were ample grounds for dissatisfaction. Bunzl's profits

peaked in 1988 at £93 million. Last year they slid to £65 million and were expected to fall further, to perhaps £55 million in the current year. The share price has crashed in the past couple of years from 170p to a closing 57p last night.

From the start of 1986 to the spring of 1988, Mr White cranked out a series of rapid acquisitions. A total of £340 million was spent on more than 50 purchases.

His critics say that the spending spree, which initially appeared to benefit Bunzl, owed more to the cosmetics of acquisition accounting than to sound strategy. They cite the takeover of United Parcels, where Mr White once had a senior management role, as the most glaring example of error. Bought at the top of the cycle in an industry with low barriers to entry, it never fulfilled its promise. During 1988 and last

year, the dealmaker went into reverse, raising £60 million in the first 12 months and unveiling a programme to realise £150 million during the second.

But even after Bunzl was pared back to its core operations, a number of institutional investors were concerned that there was little to prevent the chairman and chief executive from doing deals rather than the bread and butter activity of running the business. This led to an old-fashioned boardroom bust-up with Mr White unwilling to suffer the indignity of seeing his dual role split through the appointment of a new chairman.

Shareholders should take some comfort from the fact that this appears to be an end of the matter. There are apparently no damaging disclosures of hitherto unknown financial disasters to come.

But for the City at large, the Bunzl affair will rekindle the debate between those, like Sir Owen Green, who view non-executive directors with disfavour and the majority who favour failsafe checks and balances inside boardrooms.

Double-check trouble for twin suitors of Skoda cars



Radical tumbler: Vaclav Klaus, voucher scheme proponent

THE battle between Volkswagen and Renault/Volvo for Skoda, the Czech car maker, highlights the difficult issues dominating economic reform in East Europe. The Czechoslovaks are flattered at being vigorously courted and lobbied by three of Europe's most famous companies, but it is evident that the country and its institutions are not yet ready. Like Germany, Czechoslovakia is a fiercely federal country, where many economic decisions are taken at the level of the republics. But, unlike in Germany, the issue of subsidiarity — the division of responsibilities between the state and federal authorities — has not been decided. For this reason, to win approval both bidders had to go through a plethora of Czechoslovak national and federal ministries, in addition to securing the support of the company's management. This complexity explains why the decision over the future of Skoda has taken so many months, and will not be officially announced probably until later this month. It is this background of political stalemate and infighting within the various governments, that the radical economic reform programme, proposed by Vaclav Klaus, the federal finance minister, has to be judged. His proposal of privatisation, which goes far beyond anything that has ever been witnessed in Britain or elsewhere, is for a quick wholesale transfer of state-owned assets into the private sector. This is to be achieved by means of vouchers, or investment money, which will be allocated free to every man, woman and child in the country. They will not be sold because the savings levels are insufficient. The vouchers, which carry no value, can then be transferred into shares. The mechanism of this transfer has not been decided yet, but essentially it works on the basis that the number of shares which each voucher, or its attached coupons, can buy is determined by simple supply and demand mechanisms. The greater the demand for shares in a company, the fewer

Volkswagen and Renault might be capable and patient enough to put up with some of these East European anachronisms, smaller investors are likely to be frustrated at an early stage in the process.

The voucher system is also likely to create some confusion in the City of London, whose firms are competing to offer advice to the various ministries and companies involved.

Czech officials already have let it be known that they believe the quality of advice they have received from some of the companies involved, is below par, and in some cases incompetent, as a plethora of City firms jumps on the East Europe bandwagon. These include merchant and investment banks, accountants and auditors, business consultants, and specialist smaller firms.

The irony in the case of Mr Klaus' vouchers is that its one-stop approach is in need of little advice, particularly since Mr Klaus has a clear idea of how to proceed. The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, which will become operational next year, has already said it will not compete with City firms, although it will play a role of advising governments on whom to appoint as advisers.

There can be no doubt that Czechoslovakia is embarking on one of the most daring economic experiments of all time, probably even more so than the takeover of East Germany by West Germany. But there is an increasing realisation, even among politicians who prefer a more cautious approach, that the voucher system is without alternative.

The country is on the brink of a severe energy shortfall, while economic growth in much of the rest of the world slows and with it the West's generosity towards East Europe's struggling economies. For all its imperfections, the voucher system, in its most radical format, is superior to most schemes on offer by Western advisers.

WOLFGANG MÜNCHAU
Prague

Volkswagen backed, page 31

Westbury builds fortress

DESPITE the worst housing slump since the war, Westbury is a share to back. Like most of its rivals, the company has seen profits caught in a pincer movement by falling demand and high interest rates. But Westbury is among the select band which has managed to preserve its collective balance sheet, maintain a long (but not over-valued) land bank and keep its sales and production teams intact. Throw in the added attraction of a heavy exposure to the first-time buyer market, and Westbury begins to stand out from the crowd.

To some extent investors have already recognised this. The shares have risen strongly relative to the market since the start of 1990, moving from an April low point of 128p to close at 177p yesterday, down 3p on the day. The six months to end-August brought the worst trading conditions the company has experienced, with profits crashing from £18.2 million last year to just £3.1 million. But that was due to a conscious decision to go hard for volume and let margins take the strain.

Slightly more than 1,100 new homes were sold in the first half of this year and last. But selling prices could not be held. They averaged £71,700, against £81,500 last time, the fall being a combination of market weakness, incentives to buyers of roughly £3,500 per unit, and a change in the sales mix towards smaller homes. While operating margins shrank from 23 per cent to just 10.6 per cent, the maintained volume kept borrowings, which were £53.7 million at the half-end against £52.3 million, under tight control. Gearing was almost unchanged at 50 per cent.

Westbury has a land bank of 7,200 plots with planning consent, and a further 6,400 under option. In the full year completions should be up on 1989's 2,200, and profits of £10 million are likely, against

£28 million. The prospective price/earnings ratio is up to 13.

million in prospect this year, the shares trade on a prospective multiple of less than 15 and look overvalued.

Leigh Interests

LEIGH Interests has begun the process of swallowing HT Hughes, its erstwhile quoted rival in the waste disposal sector, confident that indignation will not result. The City, however, has put the bi-carbonate of soda on stand-by, just in case, and the company's shares languish at 258p, compared with 351p in August.

The rating probably reflects investors' disenchantment with the sector, rather than with the company. The Severn Trent/Caird debacle focused minds on the risks attached to waste disposal and landfill and removed much of the green premium the sector once enjoyed.

Leigh derives 50 per cent of revenues from the treatment of liquid waste which carries a higher risk than landfill. Its previous rating owed as much to its perceived vulnerability to a takeover bid — Caird, ironically, was linked with Leigh in better days — as to its respectable financial performance. The enlarged Leigh is less vulnerable and the bid premium has vanished.

Pre-tax profits up 93 per cent to £6.72 million for the half-year to end-September and earnings £5.7 million ahead to 8.9p a share were in line with the company's own forecast after the all-shares bid for Hughes, which in turn matched earlier City expectations. Almost half the increase in profits was attributed to acquisitions, chiefly Clay Colliery, which was bought late last year for £17 million. Despite the corporate activity, Leigh still has about £15 million in the bank left over from February's rights issue. With pre-tax profits of £15

BT chief criticises EC market

lain Vallance, chairman of British Telecom, yesterday accused the European Commission of moving too slowly to liberalise telecommunications.

At a conference in London on the government's forthcoming telecommunications duopoly policy review, Mr Vallance said it was vital other countries offered at least similar regulatory and policy environments to allow BT to compete fairly.

He said no European country had followed the UK's lead in breaking the network infrastructure and telephone monopolies of mainly state-owned concerns. A failure within the EC to open up a liberalised, pan-European, telecommunications market was particularly threatening to BT, as its domestic market faced "major competition from very serious world players".

He singled out the Cable TV Association, whose members are dominated by US telecom and media interests, for special criticism. Instead of being completely free to enter the US telecommunication markets, significant restrictions operated. These excluded foreign firms from controlling or owning a US company with a common carrier radio licence to provide services such as cellular telephony, mobile radio and telepoint. Restrictions also banned companies such as BT from owning or controlling US companies with TV broadcast licences.

He said the government's review of the BT/Mercury duopoly should be mindful of these US restrictions, and that overseas companies competing for a slice of the UK market "operate from a secure base in protected home markets. They need no feather-bedding of any kind".

NICK NUTTALL
Technology Correspondent

THE TIMES CITY DIARY

Wild team powers ahead

WILF Wild, the specialist utilities salesman who has been known to sport a red rose in his button hole at election time, is about to change jobs for the sixth time in seven years. Wild, whose previous posts of call have included Wood Mackenzie and Citicorp Scrimgeour Vickers, has resigned from Laing & Crutchfield to join Smith New Court. Due to start on November 12, he will be working with analysts Alistair Buchanan, who specialises in electricity stocks, and Stephen Doe, a water company expert. "It means that we will be the only utilities team as such in London," says Buchanan. "I have known Wilf for more than two years. He has only changed jobs so often because several of the firms he was with closed down." This addition to the utilities team is particularly significant for Smith New Court since it is advising all 12 of the electricity generating boards. Once dealings in electricity shares begin on December 11, the firm will remain broker to four of them, East Midlands, Southern, South Wales and Northweb. "We will also be brokers to Hydro-Electric, so it is great to have Wilf joining us," adds Buchanan.

Child benefit

SALES executives at Save & Prosper, the investment house, have a special incentive to bring in extra

business before Christmas. Not only will their career prospects improve, but the BBC Children in Need appeal could benefit to the tune of £250,000. Save & Prosper will give the charity the equivalent of the first monthly premium for every individual life and pension plan opened through their direct sales division between now and Christmas Eve. The company has set the ball rolling with a donation of £50,000, but senior executives expect that, with 700 ambitious salesmen and women taking part, the final figure will be five times that amount.

Handover herald

CITY analysts are not always known for their versatility, but John Bailey of Cazenove, Louise Hough of BZW, Emma Burdett of Hoare Govett and Mark Huxson of SG Warburg could well have an alternative career ahead of them should



"Ms Gordon, sweep the window ledge for me"

they ever become bored with following the retail sector. The four stole the show at a karaoke party hosted by Our Price in Brixton with a rendition of the John Travolta/Olivia Newton John classic song *Summer Nights*. The party, held at trendy nightclub the Fridge, was to celebrate the opening of the three hundredth Our Price store, part of the WH Smith chain. The only criticism of the quartet was their over-emphasis of the line "Tell me more, tell me more", which they sang while staring fixedly at Our Price managing director Richard Handover, who came a close second with his version of *Big Spender*. With their voices lubricated by small quantities of Japanese beer, the four even outshone the official band, EMF, which observers described as "noisy" in comparison.

Dogged daring

ANYONE who thinks there is no money left in the City should have been at the Savoy Hotel on Wednesday when 350 bankers and brokers gathered for the October Club 1990 Racing Dinner. The event raised more than £110,000 for COMBAT to fund research into Huntington's chorea, the debilitating disease. "It's really quite humbling to have raised so much money in these markets. The last race raised £40,000 alone," says James Lupton, a director of Baring Brothers, who successfully challenged two tables to increase their bets. "A few of us put £800

down and challenged Cazenove and Morgan Grenfell to do the same. Then there was a stampede, since everyone else wanted to do better than them." Donors included Chris Statham, a UK equity salesman at Morgan Stanley, who forked out £900 for a gothic dog kennel, designed by Thomas Messel and Lord Snowdon. "He doesn't even have a dog," says one amused colleague.

Unfortunate focus

AS IF plunging property values were not enough to contend with, property surveyor Conrad Riblat, where John Riblat, British Land's chairman, is the senior partner, is starting to think his luck really has taken a turn for the worse. Three of his employees have been struck down within a matter of days. At a football match in Brentwood, Essex, David Hyams, a partner of the firm, was head-butted by an opponent and treated for concussion. Then Bob Bowden, a partner in its investment department, broke his shoulder while goalkeeping. The last-trick was completed yesterday when a Lucrozade bottle fell out of the sky, knocking Richard Chaplin, a partner in the office agency department, unconscious as he walked to the Mayfair offices of Randsworth Trust, the property investment company. It has given a new meaning to the firm's slogan: "Concentrated energy, precisely focused".

CAROL LEONARD

Dan Air in sale talks at Cathay

DAVID James, the new chairman and chief executive of Davies & Newman, confirmed talks are under way with Cathay Pacific over the sale of the engineering base of the troubled Dan Air subsidiary at Gatwick airport.

However, he stressed Cathay is one of several companies in talks and any deal is still "some weeks away". Mr James added there will be no changes in either the structure or operations at Dan Air in the immediate future. "As far as I am concerned I do not recognise any short-term timetable necessity and am not under any pressure to do anything radical. I have no problems in continuing as we are," he said.

It had been intended that a top airline manager would be appointed to the board to run the day to day activities of the airline, but that has been postponed.

"I have today formed a board of directors which, for the moment, remains the board which will continue as such well into the future. It had originally been thought that Sir Ian Poddar, the former chairman of Dan Air, would resign, but after discussions with Mr James he has agreed to stay on as non-executive director on the main Davies & Newman board. Mr James said this will enable Sir Ian's airline experience to be used in the transition period.

HARVEY ELLIOTT
Air Correspondent

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about town

The company has already entered the executive market with a new £40,000 V8 model. The smaller V6 is likely to be almost as luxurious although not as expensive. The whole range will be in the current cost band of £16,000 to £26,000.



the show three to get ready . . . and go, go, go to pay a record price for a numberplate which will be special to fans of Elvis Presley. Christie's, South Kensington, is not speculating but collectors believe the numberplate, ELV 1S, which comes up for auction on December 7, could fetch a world record price. Fans of Presley's 1960 film *GI Blues* will also be able to bid for GI BLU, which is expected to bring up to £10,000.

ATHLETICS

The marathon may be the event for Evans by a distance

From DAVID POWELL, ATHLETICS CORRESPONDENT, NEW YORK

IMAGINE winning a million on the pools at the age of 30 and you will have some idea of how Paul Evans has been feeling. Evans was well into athlete's middle-age when, thanks to a whim, he joined sports' upper classes. Local league football at 25, jet-setting athlete at 29. Now he is out to spend, spend, spend his talent before it is too late.

Evans's first cross on the coupon was the Lowestoft Carnival, 1986. He entered the road race with his football team to raise money for charity, emptied some pockets and turned a few heads. Footballers with no experience of 10-kilometre racing are not supposed to run 33min 35sec on their first time out.

Evans has developed into one of Britain's best on the track (28min 18sec this year) and, following the principle that without gambling you cannot win, he is ready to try again. This time it is the New York Marathon, on Sunday. A bit like Lowestoft, really. No one here is expecting to see him at the sharp end.

But British marathon running is in need of a rescue act, as the Commonwealth Games and European championships proved. Unlike most, Evans wants to compete in a championship more than anything else. A good run here would veer him towards the marathon.

Anything under the 2hr 10min he is aiming for — and the course is a tough one —

should stir the British board with offers of financial help and immediate selection for the world championships next year, though it probably will not. If you are tough enough to run 26 miles, you are tough enough to look after yourself is the board's apparent attitude.

And, on marathon selection, there was so much dithering over picking Geoff Wightman, an obvious choice, for the European championships that they are hardly likely to be forward-thinking enough to give an athletic nine months notice.

Evans made his international 10,000 metres debut in June with a win against Finland; in August, in the Sun Life Great Race, a three-week endurance event covering 235 miles, he was Britain's best again, winning five stages; now, hurrying on to the next peak, he is here for his marathon debut without so much as a training run of more than 20 miles behind him.

You can hear the sub-2hr 20min club whispering "Sub-2hr 10min? No chance!" The Belgrave Harrier, though, is not so sure.

He covered the Great Race at 2hr 10min marathon pace. On the seventeenth day of hard running, he threw in a 63min 35sec half marathon. "The days of Steve Jones are gone and I would like to think I might be the next British marathon runner of his stan-

dard," Evans said. "There is only one way to find out." Jones set a world-best 2hr 5min 55sec in 1984 but, though Paul Davies-Hale won Chicago last year and Allister Hutton is the London champion, only one Briton, Tony Milovosov, has run sub-2hr 10min since the New York marathon two years ago, and that was not by much.

Evans has been tugged this way and that in trying to decide if he is ready. "I am scared of the marathon because people say that, once you go up in distance, it is hard to come back down and I'll be stuck with it," he said during the Great Race.

"People," evidently, do not realise that two of the world's best, Douglas Wakihara and Steve Monahetti, have improved their 10,000 metres since becoming marathon runners. David Moorcroft, Britain's 5,000 metres European record-holder, is one who has tried to dissuade Evans. "He should explore his potential at 10,000 metres first," Moorcroft said.

But Evans has voted with Waldemar Cierpinski, twice the Olympic marathon champion. "Cierpinski told me that the type of running I was doing in the Great Race was the sort of training he was doing before he won his Olympic medals," Evans said. Nothing talks like experience. It was as if the man from Zetters had called round to help him fill in his coupon.

The race for runners who like the wild going



In the dark: Karrimor runners, with maps and compasses at the ready, need a torch, too, when the going gets murky

Masters of suffering and survival

ROBERT HOWARD samples the delights and rigours of the Karrimor International Mountain Marathon

WAITING to start the annual Karrimor International Mountain Marathon beside Loch Rannoch in the central highlands of Scotland, I thought nervously about the two days of survival and self-sufficiency that lay ahead. I would be crossing some of the most remote mountain terrain in Britain but competing against over 3,000 other runners who had been drawn to this remote spot to take part in a unique race.

For the past 23 years, the challenge of the "Karrimor" has attracted fell runners and orienteers to mountain areas all over Britain and it is now so popular that the organisers — who make outdoor equipment — reject more applications to take part than they accept. Any race which can inspire such huge numbers to travel so far north for an uncomfortable weekend in hostile surroundings must be special, but the only way to discover the secret of the Karrimor experience was the hard way. I had to take part.

For safety reasons everyone competes in pairs and my partner was Ian Douglas, a very capable Scottish hill walker. Finding the right partner is essential as the Karrimor tests teamwork to the limit and has been known to make and break friendships. Next we needed to

pack carefully for an overnight camp as we had to be self-sufficient for the two days of the race. Taking too much would slow us down but carrying too little food or clothing could lead to exhaustion and hypothermia.

We arrived at the start with 15lb packs but no idea where we would have to go. Like all participants, the Karrimor is about stepping into the unknown and only as we started were we given a list of map references locating the points we must visit to complete our 24-kilometre course for the day. Some were on mountain tops, others in the middle of nowhere and finding them and choosing the fastest route between them was the navigational part of the challenge.

We were soon crossing trackless open countryside where thick heather, numerous bogs and flooded burns made progress difficult, especially carrying a rucksack. At least, the weather was dry and map and compass work was made easy by the high cloud level. Had we been in thick mist, finding our

way would have been far more difficult.

Not everyone was finding the navigation easy and we came across pairs who, if not hopelessly lost, were arguing bitterly about which way to go. For us, the physical strain of crossing such wild terrain was more tiring, especially the long climbs and wading rivers, one of which I fell into.

After four-and-a-half hours and just when I felt I could not go up another hill, we finished our course at the head of the beautiful Glen Lyon where a field was set aside for the overnight camp. Now the contents of our rucksacks had to be unpacked and our camp craft came into play. The more comfortable and well-fed we were at the camp, the better we would perform on the second day.

During the afternoon what had previously been a deserted spot was transformed into a thriving tented city as more and more teams arrived, many talking for longer than we had and a few finishing in the dark. As resting runners sat around their stoves, the conversations were about the shared experiences of the day and the prospects for tomorrow. It was an atmosphere of camaraderie, not competition.

The first day had been a test of

stamina and self-reliance, battling against the elements and the mountains, but the overnight publication of the results so far rewarded us as we were also competing in a race. Having survived so far, we were already more confident and thorough place out of 250 brought a competitive edge to the second day.

Nevertheless, getting started again early next morning was an uncomfortable experience as wet shoes and clothes were put on and aching muscles forced into action. At 19 kilometres, there was less distance to cover on the second day but low cloud, rain and more climbing meant it was just as difficult for already weary legs.

Inspired by our high position and with no navigational errors, we pushed ourselves harder, finishing back at Loch Rannoch in just under four hours and at the point of exhaustion. Our efforts were enough to take 19th place but that was secondary to the feeling of triumph at finally completing the course. Crossing the line, I realised why runners return to this race again and again. Elation at the finish more than compensated for any hardships along the way and the satisfaction of having completed the challenge. Although 46 changes have been made to the regulations for 1991, only half a dozen or so have much significance.

The responsibilities of the clerk of the course have been redefined so that the committee bears the ultimate responsibility for courses, fences and safety; the penalty value for ineligibility of former specialists to run in point-to-point races has been raised by £1,000 to £7,500; any rider who has a fall must report to the doctor.

On one occasion last season a horse was withdrawn without the owner's permission. In future the authority to act for an owner must be in writing. Unless a withdrawal has been caused by circumstances outside the control of the owner, a fine of £100 will be imposed.

A new insurance scheme for riders has been introduced giving a weekly payment of £100 for anybody unable to work following a point-to-point injury.

RACING

Carson denied as Arzanni shines

WILLIE Carson must wait a little longer to register his best score after drawing a blank from two rides at Newmarket yesterday.

Carson began the day on 182 winners, his total when he won his third championship in 1978, and looked to have an excellent chance of reaching a personal milestone on Trainglot, the Cesarewitch winner, in the George Stubb's Stakes.

Unhappily for Carson, however, Arzanni, the mount of Pat Eddery, proved far too much of a handful and ran out an emphatic three lengths winner. Arzanni, trained by Luca Cumani, looks the type to progress into a force in next season's cup races.

Arzanni was the second winner of the day for Eddery. The champion, now on the 205 mark for the season, initiated a 9v-1 double by capturing division one of the Terrace House Maiden Stakes on Shihama, the 11-8 favourite, who held Resique by a short head.

Alec Scott, the trainer of Shihama, said: "She has really only had a month's preparation as she had a lot of stoppages in her training. I had hoped to introduce her early in September, but she jarred herself."

Scott made it a 5-1 double by taking the other division of the race with another new comer, Possessive Dancer, on whom Walter Swinburn got up by a neck to beat No Comebacks. The winning rider beat Possessive Dancer — his first success in this realm and the filly races for his mother Doreen.

Swinburn was completing a near 6-1 double on Possessive Dancer after comfortably winning the Queen's Plate House Maiden Stakes by 3½ lengths on Perfolia, trained by John Gosden.

Weather to blame for entry drop

By BRIAN BEEL

THE recently published statistics from the Jockey Club on the 1990 point-to-point season are meaningless as a measure of judging the health of the sport.

Both entries and number of runners showed a significant decline from previous seasons but this was caused entirely by the weather, with lack of rain making the going firm on most courses from early April.

Although 46 changes have been made to the regulations for 1991, only half a dozen or so have much significance.

The responsibilities of the clerk of the course have been redefined so that the committee bears the ultimate responsibility for courses, fences and safety; the penalty value for ineligibility of former specialists to run in point-to-point races has been raised by £1,000 to £7,500; any rider who has a fall must report to the doctor.

On one occasion last season a horse was withdrawn without the owner's permission. In future the authority to act for an owner must be in writing. Unless a withdrawal has been caused by circumstances outside the control of the owner, a fine of £100 will be imposed.

A new insurance scheme for riders has been introduced giving a weekly payment of £100 for anybody unable to work following a point-to-point injury.

Desert Orchid has Devon among options

DESERT Orchid has been entered for the Plymouth City Hurdle Gold Cup on Tuesday but a decision on his participation will not be made until next week.

The grey's trainer, David Elsworth, will also enter him at Wincanton next Thursday, where he could run in either the Badger Beer Handicap, now run over three miles one furlong, or the Silver Birch Handicap Chase, the race he won last year though now reduced in distance to two miles five furlongs.

Panto Prince, the winner of the Devon race last season, will also be entered at Wincanton, as well as the Needwood Champion Chase at Uttoxeter the same day.

The eight acceptors are: Blueberry King, Clever Folly, Desert Orchid, Knuckback, Panto Prince, Sabin Du Loir, Seator Country, Wincanton Boy.

Raymond plans Macau visit

Bruce Raymond will ride in Macau for two months this winter. He leaves Britain at the end of the month to join the leading local trainer, Paul Leung Che-Pong.

Raymond joins Lester Pigott, who has announced his intention to ride in Hong Kong, and Pat Eddery.

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RACING

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BADMINTON

Pointers to future in series loss

ENGLAND'S series loss to Denmark is providing insights into what planning Ciro Cingillo, the manager, must do to start a revival over the next two years (Richard Eaton writes). England's third defeat by the European champions, by 4-0 at Swindon on Wednesday, settled the series.

Darren Hall is crucial to the England team. He is who beat Poul-Erik Hoyer, the Danish Open champion, at Milton Keynes, is the only singles player varying on world class.

The other singles player, Peter Bush, is getting a valuable experience. His progress in the coming months will decide whether he figures in long-term plans.

Cingillo wants to send young players to the Far East. John Quinn, Neil Cottrell, Robert Knock and Stefan Pandya may go as doubles players.

RESULTS: England 0, Denmark 4 (5mg players). P Bush lost to T Stuer-Lauridsen, 15-10, 15-13. D Hall lost to Poul-Erik Hoyer, 15-12, 15-15. N Cottrell and O Wright lost to T Lund and J Hohl-Christensen, 15-4, 15-10. Pandya and Bush lost to Lund and Stuer-Lauridsen, 15-7, 15-15, 15-2.

SCHOOLS RUGBY

Methodist College may find cup a test

By MICHAEL STEVENSON

WITH the draw for the Ulster Schools' Cup imminent, Methodist College, who are still unbeaten, have already established themselves as firm favourites, although they only scraped home (11-9) against Ballymena Academy.

The ease with which Royal Belfast A.I. saw off Ballymena (23-4) suggests that MCB will be pushed all the way, although Coleraine, having slipped up against Ballymena (15-6), did manage to beat RBAL.

Beset by injury problems, Yorkville Schools, who have just returned from a brief Irish tour, found Ulster in impressive mood at Ravenhill (31-7) and also lost in Dublin, where they met Leinster Schools (24-6).

Trinity, Croydon, with four county players in a strong pack, have maintained their unbeaten record with further victories against MCS Wexford (130-0), St Dunstan's (14-4) and RGS Guildford (18-3), scoring 249 points in the process to only 23 conceded.

Plymouth College reached the half-term break unbeaten in regular fixtures with wins to

HOCKEY

Counties locked in rivalry

By ALIX RAMSAY

COMPETITION is getting tight and tense in the NatWest women's county championships after only two weeks of competition.

In the north area, Lancashire, the national champions, have much work to do to catch up with the leaders. Last year, Lancashire cruised to the title without conceding a goal and they seemed to be in much the same form last Saturday, thrashing Humberside 6-1. A defeat at the hands of Sheffield League has put them back in fourth place in the table.

The crunch match will be tonight between Yorkshire and Sheffield League, living first and second in the table. To the casual observer, this may seem a little confusing, Sheffield is, after all, in Yorkshire. But so vast are the counties involved and so great the number of players that four of the League's counties — Manchester, Lancashire, Humberside and Yorkshire — have all earned county status and compete in the championships alongside their county rivals.

Throw the element of local rivalry into the struggle for top position and Yorkshire and Sheffield League's match promises to prove irresistible entertainment.

Meanwhile, Manchester League will be hoping that when they turn out for their game against Lancashire on Saturday their goal posts will be in place. Last week, somebody walked off with them before a ball had been hit in anger. Elsewhere in the East region, the match of the day will be between Kent and Essex, two county champions, and Essex, the runners-up. Last week, Essex were caught out when two of their team were still on a plane returning from their holidays. Despite some hasty rearranging, Essex still ran out 3-0 winners over Norfolk.

Kent, too, have had their problems. With three of their players in the England camp, they were unable to play for their county, plus a couple of retirements, they are not the force that lifted the county trophy two years running.

In the South, the leadership could well change hands when the three top teams meet, Hampshire playing Middlesex and Berkshire. The same is true in the Midlands where Staffordshire, in first place, take on Warwickshire, lying second on goal difference.

As the top teams steal the limelight, have a care for the smaller counties, such as Lincolnshire. They play Suffolk on Sunday and, while the result may not be the most significant of the week, Lincolnshire will be giving it their all. Last time they took on Suffolk (17-4) and Lincoln are determined not to let that happen again.

ROWING

Time to encourage sculling

From RICHARD BURNELL in TASMANIA

THE outstanding British performance on semi-finals day in the world championships here on Lake Barington, Tasmania, was the Pivak and Redgrave pair, dominated from the first stroke. Pivak and Redgrave were always second, but the Pimenovs always won. With Sierozimsky, Tass and Voinouli, of Romania, and Dumay and Lacasse, of France, were several seconds faster, but in a harder race with more favourable wind conditions.

There were only three other British crews involved in the semi-finals. James Hartland and Richard Stait in the lightweight double scull, and the lightweight and heavyweight quad sculls crews. None were competitive at this level, and without intending unkindness none were realistically expected to be so, though the heavyweight quad may well have been one of the fastest British quads to date.

Sculling at international level has been woefully neglected in Britain for a long time, partly because there had been no good sculling coaches and partly because the natural sculler always tends to be drafted into a rowing crew in a team which is not over-blessed with talent. Now Britain's pool of promising scullers is being replenished by a handful of experienced scullers, and the coaching problem can be solved, there being presently few British coaches with sculling experience. This could be the future for the up and coming generation.

SEMI-FINAL RESULTS

Men
First three in each semi-final qualify for final.

LIGHTWEIGHT SINGLE SCULLS: First semi-final: 1. J Murphy (GB), 7:10.06; 2. P Stansfield (GB), 7:16.06; 3. M Tordella (USA), 7:18.06. Second semi-final: 1. J Murphy (GB), 7:10.06; 2. P Stansfield (GB), 7:16.06; 3. M Tordella (USA), 7:18.06.

DOUBLE SCULLS: First semi-final: 1. V Stansfield (GB), 7:10.06; 2. P Stansfield (GB), 7:16.06; 3. M Tordella (USA), 7:18.06. Second semi-final: 1. V Stansfield (GB), 7:10.06; 2. P Stansfield (GB), 7:16.06; 3. M Tordella (USA), 7:18.06.

QUAD SCULLS: First semi-final: 1. V Stansfield (GB), 7:10.06; 2. P Stansfield (GB), 7:16.06; 3. M Tordella (USA), 7:18.06. Second semi-final: 1. V Stansfield (GB), 7:10.06; 2. P Stansfield (GB), 7:16.06; 3. M Tordella (USA), 7:18.06.

TODAY'S FIXTURES

7.30 unless stated
FOOTBALL
Barclays League
Fourth division
Aldershot v Haverhill
18th LEAGUE LEAGUE: Premier division
Norwich v Bolton.

RUGBY UNION
England B v Namibia (at Leicester, 7.15).

RUGBY LEAGUE
LANCASHIRE SHIELD: Semi-final, Wigan v Bolton
TOWNSHIP SENIOR COMPETITION
Salford Red Devils v Salford City Reds
Salford Lancers v Salford City Reds

OTHER SPORT
BADMINTON: World northern championship, Birmingham
SWIMMING: World cup meeting (Preston, 7.30)
TENNIS: Professional national championships (Telford).

SPORT ON TV
AMERICAN FOOTBALL: ITV 17.30-18.00. Red 42. ESPN 18.30-19.00. National Football League.
BOXING: Sportscenter 12.00-14.00 and 15.00-22.00. Matchroom event, and professional boxing.

TRY THIS
Denis Tingey's suggestion for a sporting day out
MOTORCYCLING: Day of Champions in the first motorcycle event, Kenny Roberts (three times champion), John Koppke, the 250cc champion, and Eddie Lawson, the former 500cc champion.

HOW TO GET THERE: Brands Hatch is near Farnham in Kent. From junction 3 of the M25, take the A20, from which the circuit is clearly signposted. Racing starts at 10.45am. After a prizegiving at 3.30pm, the day ends with a 5pm fireworks display. Entry is £4 for adults, and free for children under 18. Ample parking and refreshment facilities are available.

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SPORT

Inexcusable confusion over the way aggressors are punished



Burrows, of Liverpool, stretches out a leg to pull down Wallace, of Manchester United, with a 'professional foul' that earned Burrows only a booking in the Rumbelows Cup tie at Old Trafford. The action was caught in freeze-frame by ITV Sport

Refereeing lottery of 'professional foul'

By STUART JONES
FOOTBALL CORRESPONDENT

FOOTBALL referees have shown this week they still lack consistency in applying the clear and firm directive from Fifa about the "professional foul": the deliberate offence committed to stop the other side scoring. Such a foul was committed during three of the Rumbelows Cup ties — and each offender received a different penalty.

Neil Poynton, Manchester City's left back, was not even censured for bringing down Kevin Campbell, of Arsenal. David Burrows, Liverpool's left back, was merely

booked for felling Danny Wallace, Manchester United's winger. Dave Watson, Everton's central defender, was sent off for baulking Brian Deane, of Sheffield United.

Such confusion is inexcusable. Once Fifa, the world governing body, had seen what it called "the advantages which have already been demonstrated during the World Cup finals", law 12 (n) was amended even before the tournament ended. A mandatory instruction was circulated on July 6 specifically to clear the minds and the consciences of referees.

"If, in the opinion of a referee, a player, who is moving towards his

opponent's goal with an obvious opportunity to score, is intentionally and physically impeded by unlawful means, thus denying the attacking player's team the scoring opportunity, the offending player shall be sent off for serious foul play."

In the opinion of Alf Buxsh, the referee of the Sheffield United-Everton match, Watson was guilty and the appropriate action was taken. The evidence of television suggests that the challenge was clumsy rather than deliberate. Colin Harvey, the Everton manager, could be excused for feeling that the decision was particularly

cruel: without Watson, Everton lost the tie, and Harvey lost his job.

In the opinion of Ken Redfern, the referee of the Manchester City-Arsenal match, Poynton was innocent and no action was taken. Curiously, though, a free-kick was awarded to Arsenal. Fifa's missive states categorically that "unlawful means" should be interpreted as any offence which is "punishable by a free-kick or a penalty".

In the opinion of Joe Worrall, the referee of the Manchester United-Liverpool match, Burrows was neither guilty nor innocent. The case was the most blatant of

the three and, as 42,033 people waited for the verdict at Old Trafford, it seemed as though there could be only one conclusion: Liverpool were about to be reduced to ten men.

The more the incident was replayed on television on Wednesday night, the sharper the image became: it was a deliberate foul in its execution and timing. Burrows, realising he had no chance of overtaking Wallace or tackling him legitimately, thrust out a foot and hooked Wallace to the ground.

When Worrall finished speaking to Burrows and flourished only a

yellow card, United's supporters saw red. They remembered that Steve Bruce had been dismissed for the same offence earlier this season. Not only was he suspended for three matches, he also lost the captaincy.

As Alex Ferguson, the United manager, noted, Bruce may have been responsible for the leniency shown to Burrows, whose intentions had been evident as he chased after Wallace. As Wallace lay sprawled on the turf, Bruce ran over to Worrall to plead for mercy.

Thankfully, the result was not affected, but it is as well to

consider the possible consequences had Liverpool gone on to maintain their unbeaten sequence on Wednesday night and earn a replay. Instead of leaving the stadium in a state of delirium, United's followers might have been tempted to vent their frustration.

Nothing is more likely to incite a crowd than the professional foul. Managers may choose to turn a blind eye whenever it is convenient but referees must be seen consistently to use the power they have been given. No longer can they claim to be whistling in the dark.

Royle the favourite for Everton's job

By IAN ROSS

ON A day when he was privately insisting that he would not be applying for the job, Joe Royle yesterday moved a step closer to becoming the next manager of Everton.

Royle, the manager of Oldham Athletic, the second division leaders, has emerged as the man most likely to succeed Colin Harvey, who was dismissed on Wednesday as a direct consequence of Everton's disappointing start to the season.

Although Everton's decision to advertise the vacant post would suggest that the club's board of directors has entered the search for Harvey's successor with an open mind, Royle tops an unofficial shortlist of candidates which would have included Ron Atkinson, had the manager of Sheffield Wednesday not yesterday ruled himself out.

Several members of the Everton board had been lobbying for Atkinson's

appointment but the chances of the former manager of Manchester United assuming command at Goodison Park receded with the news that he is shortly to sign an extension to his present contract which will tie him to the South Yorkshire club until June, 1993.

"We are very flattered that Everton would want Ron Atkinson but if they ask for permission to approach him, it will be refused," David Richards, the Wednesday chairman, said. "He is very much a part of our plans for the future and he will not be leaving. We do not need to draw up a battle plan to keep him and frankly I was amazed and shocked by all this speculation."

Atkinson, who was born in Liverpool, confirmed that he would shortly sign a new contract. "We are almost there. I have agreed a deal with the chairman which will be sorted out shortly. I love it here," he said.

Barring an unthinkable last minute application by Kenny Dalglish, the Liverpool manager, Atkinson's declaration of contentment with life at Hillsborough paves the way for the appointment of Royle once the two parties have agreed on a formula to officially open negotiations.

As Royle pondered a future of rich promise, the man he is set to replace reflected on his three-year spell in charge at Everton. Harvey, who has spent 25 of the last 27 years in the club's service, admitted that he had failed to seize the opportunity to keep Everton at the forefront of English football.

"The opportunity to be successful was there. There was always money available to me so I never had a problem in that respect," he said. "I just did not knit it all together. When the time is right, I shall return to Everton as a fan. It was heartbreaking to wake up this morning and realise that I wasn't going into work."

Barcelona offer £1m for Molby

JAN Molby, Liverpool's Danish international midfielder, is poised to join Barcelona in a £1 million deal (Ian Ross writes).

Representatives of the Spanish club have had preliminary negotiations with the League champions. Indications are that Kenny Dalglish, the Liverpool manager, will sanction the move, but only after securing a suitable replacement.

Johan Cruyff, the Barcelona coach, who played alongside Molby for Ajax of Amsterdam in the early 1980s, enquired about his availability after Ronald Koeman sustained a serious Achilles tendon injury.

Molby, aged 27, is contracted to Liverpool until the end of the season.

Senna tells Prost the best man is champion

ADELAIDE (Reuters)

Ayrton Senna, the world champion, said that Alain Prost, his main rival in Formula One motor racing, should stop complaining and accept he was beaten to the 1990 title by a better driver. The Brazilian was crowned champion in Japan after he crashed with Prost on the first corner in Suzuka. Both were forced to retire, wrecking Prost's chances of retaining his title.

"I beat him in the same car in 1988 and I beat him with a different car this year," Senna said yesterday on the eve of practice for the Australian grand prix here. "I did not have as good a car as he had [this year] and yet with the team I was able to put it together in such a special way to beat him."

"In the end he makes me laugh. He's a guy who complains so much but the championship was not won in Japan. It was won point by point, race by race and that is why it was so rewarding for me to know that I had it right. I believed that I could do it and I achieved it."

Senna, who drove alongside Prost for McLaren for two years, rarely mentioned Prost's name but talked of "him" in a way that showed he had little respect for his rival.

After the race Prost said he believed the crash was deliberate but did not reply to Senna yesterday after instructions from his Ferrari team.

"If anything goes wrong, if anyone gets near to him, then it's a major problem," But leading drivers seemed to disagree with Senna yesterday, applauding the sport's governing body, Fisa, for launching an official enquiry into driving standards. Nelson Piquet, the former champion, told those who felt the crash in Japan had brought it on.

"After I saw the helicopter shots of the crash, I was very disappointed in Ayrton for what he'd done," Piquet said of his fellow Brazilian. "That was very, very bad for the sport."

Carling sees Argentina as five nations prelude

By DAVID HANDS
RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

ARGENTINA will make two changes to the side that came so close to beating Ireland for the second international of their tour, against England at Twickenham tomorrow. Matias Allen comes into the centre and Gonzalo Camardón wins his first cap at scrum half.

Allen's elevation is no surprise. He replaces Hernan Garcia Simon, who dislocated his elbow so badly in the 20-18 defeat against the Irish that his tour was ended and he returned home this week. Allen is the younger brother of Jorge Allen, the back-row forward who led his country during Rodolfo O'Reilly's period as coach, and was capped against Canada earlier this year.

He is slightly bigger than the forceful Garcia Simon, and it means little change to the style of the Pumas' midfield; that was possibly the main argument against introducing the elusive Lisandro Arbizu out of position, at centre rather than stand-off half.

Camardón, who snapped away busily against Eastern Counties on Tuesday, takes over from Rodrigo Crexell,

whose hands let him down at vital moments during his international debut at Lansdowne Road, Camardón, who will be 20 in December, is one of five teenagers in the party, of whom Jorge Mendez and Speranza are also in the international XV.

The Argentines trained at Lonsbury in warm sunshine yesterday while England, having gathered on Wednesday evening in time to work together, held their main training at the Stoop Memorial ground. Will Carling, the England captain, confirmed his recovery from a strained ankle ligament and shrugged off any suggestion that this was England's opportunity to take revenge for the defeat in the second summer international against the Pumas.

"There are far too many new people for it to be a revenge match for the tour," he said. "We view it more as the last game before the five nations, rather than the third game in a series with Argentina. This is a one-off that we have to use to look at players for the championship and, beyond that, the World Cup, as opposed to making sure we beat Argentina 2-1."

"This should be more of a reflection of the patterns of play we produced in the five nations last season. We developed an effective pattern, even though we lost one match, a basis from which we can progress. I'm happy with the foundation we've got but the next nine months of rugby will prove whether we are serious contenders or not."

Carling emphasised the need to produce quick second-phase and third-phase possession, which led last season to so many scores. "We had stages in the Barbarians game [in September] when we put pressure on them but didn't score any points because we didn't recycle the ball quickly enough," he said. "It's a matter of concentration rather than lack of ability."

Row over Irish rugby venue

By GEORGE ACE

THE cancellation by the Irish Rugby Football Union (IRFU) of two All Ireland League first division matches scheduled for Lansdowne Road this Saturday and next and their decision to allow the European championship football match, scheduled for November 14, between the Republic of Ireland and England to go ahead, has caused a furore in rugby circles.

The IRFU, acting on the advice of the head groundsman, has informed Wanderers and Lansdowne, the two clubs that use the international ground on alternate weekends during the rugby season, that the ground will not be available for the Wanderers-Ballymena match tomorrow — it has been

transferred to Merrion Road — and Lansdowne's game against Constitution tomorrow week.

That the ground is not available for an important All Ireland league match on November 10 and is available for an international football match four days later is the main bone of contention.

Paul Clinch, captain of Lansdowne, said: "The bottom line is surely: is Lansdowne Road a rugby ground or a soccer pitch?" His counterpart at Wanderers, Kevin Leahy, said: "We are very disappointed. In effect it means that we are surrendering home advantage. I hope it will not cause too much distraction among the players."

A spokesman for the IRFU said: "The IRFU would like to emphasise that the decision to close the pitch for the next two weeks was taken to ensure that it will be in good condition for the home international rugby championship and the World Cup next year."

"So far as the November 14 international football match is concerned we are under contract to the Football Association of Ireland (FAI) for that date."

Rugby's dilemma, page 38

Comeback delayed

The Neath and Wales lock, Gareth Llewellyn, out of action for six months with pelvic trouble, has decided to delay his rugby comeback for another week.

How punters tricked Duff on Halloween night

PAUL Hodkinson wants another bang at a world title, Barney Eastwood wants to bang some promoters heads together, and promoter Mickey Duff talks of banging away with a cannon in the Grand Hall at Wembley — an explosive mixture for a show that got underway in front of only 400 spectators. It was European championship boxing night and Halloween on Wednesday and Eastwood felt he and his man Hodkinson had been tricked not treated because of the antics of promoters.

Hodkinson had done the business perfectly, retaining his European featherweight crown with a classic combination of blows, finishing with as beautiful a left as any purist could wish. His opponent, Guy Bellehigne, saw the Grand Hall lights go out after 47 seconds of the third round, and Hodkinson was back on the world title trail.

While the Liverpoolian cele-

BRYAN STILES watches rival promoters square up for a winner-take-all 15-rounder

brated, his manager grumbled. The crowd had grown to 1,500 by the time Hodkinson had climbed into the ring, but he reckoned it could have been a capacity 2,500 — "they would have raised the roof off seeing a tremendous finish like that."

One of the reasons it was not 2,500 was that across London, at Crystal Palace, Lennox Lewis, Britain's world heavyweight hope, was taking the European title off another Frenchman, and siphoning off many supporters who would have filled those vacant seats.

"The board [the Boxing Board of Control] should not allow this to happen," Eastwood said. "They should say that there is no way this will work. Promoters should get the

arrangements right. The punters are paying good money to see fights but they will stay at home and see it on TV instead."

But Eastwood, himself a promoter, knows the problem better than most. The board were confronted with legal threats for restraint of trade from promoters who claimed that under the fair trading laws they were entitled to put on a show whenever they pleased.

The board had to back down from their long-standing instruction that there should be a fortnight's gap between big shows. They are now conducting an investigation into the problem and Wednesday night's clash was what they have always warned against.

The decisive factor is the big money from television. BBC televised the Hodkinson contest live and ITV produced a delayed screening of Lewis's victory, which was live on Eurosport. Television dic-

tates what nights it wants to screen boxing.

Promoters cannot afford to ignore the large sums on offer. The money enables them to bump up their purse offers so that they can secure the choice championship events. It means that boxing is having to dance to television's tune — a situation which, as Eastwood said, "could leave us having boxing matches in studios, with no atmosphere at all."

Duff added his weight to the argument: "Tell you what, if I had been uncommitted boxing fan I would not have gone to either show. I would have sat in front of the TV set and seen both of them."


Duff was not happy that rival promoter, Barney Eastwood, had put on the Lewis bout the same as his Wembley promotion. "If it had not been for local boxers selling tickets

to their supporters you could have fired a cannon in here tonight and not hit anybody," he said.

"I booked this hall four months ago, well before Hearn chose the date. The world boxing bodies have limited world title fights to 12 rounds — this fight is going to be a 15-rounder. We might find out how much money Barry Hearn really has got."

Back to the boxing: Hodkinson is convinced he will beat the World Boxing Council champion, Marcos Villanosa, if they meet again, after having to quit against the Mexican last June because he could not see out of badly swollen eyes. While he waits for another chance he is prepared to take on John Davison, the Geordie, for his lesser WBC International title — provided the money is right. It is a risky bout — and they want risk money.

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